Literary Reportage and the Poetics of Cold War Internationalism

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Acknowledgements

In July 2010, the summer after my first year of graduate school, I was sitting at the café terrace of Krakow's Bunkier Sztuki with my friend and grad student colleague, Saygun Gokariksel. Saygun was carrying out doctoral research for a dissertation on the anti-communist lustration campaigns that followed the collapse of Polish socialism, and I was just beginning to formulate a research agenda of my own. That summer, his research had taken him to the political archives in Warsaw, where he reported having come across Cold War-era documents that attested to a formal politics of solidarity between the Polish People's Republic and the emergent nations of the Third World. These documents were beyond the scope of his dissertation project, but we spoke at length that hot, rainy day about the historical relationship between Marxism and anti-imperialism in the former Socialist Bloc.

At the time I was in the early stages of developing a dissertation project that examined Poland's interwar literary avant-garde through the lens of postcolonial theory. But over the course of our discussion I began to consider that the periodization of such a project might miss something worth investigating about the relationship between Marxism, anti-imperialism, and postcolonialism in socialist-era Polish literary history. Having conveyed my misgivings to Saygun, he pointed to the book on the table that I had been reading before his arrival at the café—Ryszard Kapuściński's *The Soccer War*. "Why don't you write a dissertation about Kapuściński?" Saygun asked. I quickly dismissed the idea. "I'm doing my doctorate in comparative *literature*," I explained

matter-of-factly to my social scientist friend. “Kapuściński wrote *reportage*, not *literature*.”

In the days and weeks that followed, I reflected on my knee-jerk reaction to Saygun’s suggestion. Is reportage really not literature? If not, what exactly is it? If Kapuściński’s work provided a way in to the theoretical problems that most interested me (the relationship between Marxism, anti-imperialism, and postcolonialism in Eastern Europe) perhaps that was reason enough to write a dissertation about it, despite its non-literary status. Moreover, perhaps this status was a problem worth exploring in its own right. What precisely was the relationship between the form of Kapuściński’s writing and its political content? I ruminated on these questions for the rest of the summer in Krakow, and by the time I returned to Minnesota in the fall, I had made up my mind. I would write a dissertation about Kapuściński’s internationalist reportage.

I would like therefore to thank Saygun Gokariksel for planting the seed for this dissertation project. I would also like to thank they rest of the Krakow crew—artists, musicians, writers, translators, and intellectuals who I came to know in very special time and place. Thanks especially to Marta Gajcy, Soren Gauger, Scotia Gilroy, Jodi Greig, Marta Kobak, Dominic Leppla, Tas Mahr, Daniel Potter, and Garrett van Reed. I would like in particular to extend my deep gratitude to Marta Kobak, for her friendship, insight, and assistance —in the archives, and in life. In addition to Marta, several others assisted me with my research in Poland, including Henryk Jantos, Tadeusz Jaworski, and Kika Misztela. Thanks especially to Mr. Jantos for consenting to be interviewed, and to Mr. Jaworski for engaging in such thoughtful email correspondence with me.

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My doctoral committee has been an incredible source of support, inspiration, and instruction over the past eight years, as each of the members shaped both the project and my intellectual formation. Thank you to Michal Kobialka, whose approach to avant-garde

historiography taught me the importance of taking a syncretic approach to the study of aesthetics, politics, and philosophy. Thank you to Alice Lovejoy, for her mentorship and for encouraging me to expand beyond my methodological comfort zone and carry out archival research and interviews, which greatly improved the dissertation. Thank you to Keya Ganguly, whose philosophical rigor is matched only by her generosity of spirit. I would have counted myself lucky had I simply had the good fortune of studying dialectical thought with Keya, but she has also been a friend and confidant who has helped me navigate life in and beyond the institution these past many years. And thank you most of all to my advisor, Timothy Brennan. I am extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with someone who always pushes me to think through the political stakes of my ideas, and who has imparted in me a deep appreciation for the intellectual history of Marxist thought. I am grateful for having had an advisor who believed in the value of this project, and in my eventual success, even (or especially) in the moments when I could see neither. Tim approaches intellectual work as he does life: with integrity and commitment. And he inspires me to do the same.

Beyond the university, I would like thank my parents for their on-going support for the path I have chosen; they never doubted that their daughter had a good reason for moving from sunny California to frigid Minnesota. Thank you to my dad, Stanley Zubel, who held on to his Polish-American identity (in otherwise not very Polish San Diego) and fostered in me an appreciation for my "roots." He also fostered an appreciation for intellectual work across a range of disciplines and knowledge areas by modeling for me what it means to approach life in an inquisitive and philosophically-minded way. Thank

you to my mom, Katherine Redlinger Zubel, who has been a constant source of strength and emotional support, especially during the difficult final year of dissertation writing. Finishing a dissertation takes discipline and grit, both things I learned from my mom. Somehow she always seemed to know when to ask how the writing was going, and when not to ask. She also always knew when to buy a plane ticket and join me in Europe so that we could go on adventures in between my academic work. And adventure we did! And thanks to my brother, Nick Zubel, who always reminded me to keep balance in my life, and to not let go of my other passions, even as I delved deeply into this one. A word of gratitude for my Polish grandparents and great-grandparents, is also in order. I am grateful to my grandfather, Stanley Zubel, who helped me "bust out" of Southern California and go back to the old country to live, work, and study Polish. I count it as one of my greatest accomplishments to have been able to speak his first language with him shortly before he passed away. And thanks to my great-grandfather, Ludwik "Louis" Zubel. Louis was a newspaper man, and while I never met him, I'd like to think my interest in journalistic genres would have pleased him.

Thank you most of all to my husband, John Conley, who has been with me every step of this graduate school journey. Bearing close witness to your way of being in the world has made me a more creative and generous thinker. Every day you teach me what it means to be a true intellectual, inside and outside the institution. Without your support, I'm not sure I could have seen this project through to the end—though you certainly never doubted I would. Thank you for being a steady, thoughtful presence in the face of all the blood, sweat, and tears that graduate school extracted, as well as for being there to

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Dedicated to Myron Price (1948- 2015).

Abstract

Based on a neglected archive of Polish cultural encounters with the Third World, this comparative study examines the ways formal techniques of narrative nonfiction developed in conjunction with political upheaval in the socialist and decolonizing worlds in the second-half of the twentieth century. By putting the work of Polish journalist Ryszard Kapuściński in conversation with that of an international milieu of anti-colonial writers and filmmakers of the period, I develop a new genealogy of the reportage genre to show how it was mobilized to create a political culture of "friendship" between the Second and Third Worlds, in accordance with the Soviet Union's foreign policy. But it is not simply that this body of work reflects Soviet Cold War strategy that interests me. The heavy-handed influence of the Soviet Union restricted the satellite states' right to national self-determination in a manner that seemed to be in contradiction with the Socialist Bloc's official support for anti-imperialism in the Third World. This contradiction found form, I argue, in works of anti-colonial reportage that, through the use of intertextuality, intermediality, allegory, and allusion express a content in excess of what they report. They express, I contend, the desire, held by many Third World and satellite state subjects alike, to develop democratic alternatives to the political systems of both the West and the Soviet Union.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Introduction

> "[T]he intensity and viability of all revolutions since 1789 may be gauged with fair accuracy by their attitude towards Poland. Poland is their 'external' thermometer."
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> – Karl Marx[1]

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe has occupied a somewhat vexed position with regard to the intellectual traditions of both Marxism and postcolonial theory. For the former, the twentieth century history of the region appears to offer little more than a series of case studies of the Stalinist deformation of the socialist project and the eventual triumph of the neoliberal reaction against it. For the latter, although the dissolution of the Socialist Bloc seemed to demonstrate the errors of teleology supposedly endemic to Marxist thought, and no doubt helped to bolster the rise of postcolonial studies as a discipline, Europe's semi-periphery has often been excluded from postcolonial theorists' efforts to deconstruct the discourse of East/West, or North/South. As Benita Parry has observed, "[E]ntire continents of the empirical and conceptual are missing from the maps of the world drawn by the postcolonial critics" (108).

Beginning in the late 1990s, the emergence within Slavic studies of what has come to be called "postsocialist studies" would attempt to address this exclusion by applying postcolonial critique to Eastern Europe, while holding Marxist theory at a

[1] See Marx and Engels, *Collected Writings*, vol. 40, p. 85.

distance.[2] "Mainstream" critics of both postcolonial and Marxist theory mostly paid this new field of study little mind as they turned their attention increasingly towards the global south, and towards theoretical debates with each other—failing to recognize that the study of the postsocialist world might have something critical to offer these debates.

Like postcolonialism, postsocialism was for this new field not simply a geographic or temporal designation, but a cultural condition that required examination and theorization. Thus, when David Chioni Moore posed the question "Is the Post- in Post-colonial the Post- in Post-Soviet?" in his well-known essay by that title, his affirmative (though qualified) answer aimed not only to expand the historical-geographic space of the postcolonial to include the republics and territories of the former Eastern Bloc, but to make the case for a "postcolonial hermeneutics" that "might add richness" to studies of the literature and culture of the region (124). For Moore and many other scholars of postsocialism, concepts like orientalism, hybridity, and subalternity have proved to be productive for analyzing the economic and cultural fallout of centuries of foreign domination of East-Central Europe by the Russian, Prussian, and Austro-Hungarian Empires, followed by Nazi occupation and Soviet domination.

Indeed, postcolonial theory has appeared to be so relevant to the contemporary Eastern European experience that it has at times found an audience beyond the academy. In her 2005 article, "Said a sprawa polska" ("Said and the Polish Question")—published in *Newsweek Polska* (Polish Newsweek)—Ewa M. Thompson argued that "Poland was

[2] As recently as the 2014 Annual Meeting of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies a panel titled "Is Slavic Studies Ready for Marxist Theory?" was provocative enough to spark controversy.

no less a colony than the countries of Africa."[3] Concepts put forward by Edward Said in *Orientalism* provide a critical apparatus, Thompson claimed, for understanding the Polish experience of imperialist partition in the eighteen and nineteenth centuries, and of "soviet subjugation" in the twentieth.[4]

In this way, the embrace of postcolonial theory by Eastern European Studies over the past several decades not only demonstrates the suppleness of the "postcolonial hermeneutic," it also, I contend, serves as an example of what Said believed to be the insidiousness of "Traveling Theories"—the fact that "their original provenance—their history of adversarial, oppositional derivation—dulls the critical consciousness, convincing it that a once insurgent theory is still insurgent, lively, responsive to history" ("Traveling Theory", 247). In the political climate of contemporary Poland, conflating the post- of postsocialism with the post- of postcolonialism is not a politically-neutral intellectual exercise. It provides critics like Thompson with a seemingly cosmopolitan academic discourse with which to voice strong nationalist positions. As Jan Sowa has argued, "In the East even far more than in the West . . . [the defeat of Marxism] made postcolonialism—in compliance with its poststructuralist and despite its Marxist roots—a deeply conservative and not a progressive discourse" ("Forget Postcolonialism"). For Sowa the embrace of poststructuralist postcolonial theory by anti-communist scholars of postsocialist studies represents not so much a dulling of the critical consciousness of the original theory, but reflects the conservatism at the core of the latter discipline.

That postcolonial theory may not be as progressive as it claims to be is hardly a

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[3] Translations mine.
[4] Thompson has also produced scholarly work on the topic of postsocialism/postcolonialism, including the monograph *Imperial Knowledge: Russian Literature and Colonialism* (2000).

novel point of criticism. Vivek Chibber, in *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* (2013), is but the most recent in a long line of Marxist scholars to criticize postcolonial theory (or more precisely, Subaltern Studies) for "failing to deliver on its two basic promises—that it has developed an explanatory framework adequate for understanding the nature of modernity in the East, and that it is a platform for radical critique" (23). Chibber's polemic reinvigorated a debate that had been carried out (arguably with more nuance) in the previous decade in the work Arif Dirlik, Benita Parry, Harry Harootunian, Timothy Brennan, and many others. And yet, the Marxist critique of postcolonial studies has gone largely under-acknowledged within postsocialist studies. This is an unfortunate oversight—not least because the right-wing nationalists currently consolidating power in much of Eastern Europe must be met with left movements equipped with a theoretical apparatus adequate to the postsocialist condition. More broadly, the study of the postsocialist world from a postcolonial perspective informed by Marxism (rather than anti-communism) may serve to productively reframe how we understand the substance of the debate between Marxism and postcolonial theory.

This approach, which I call Marxist postsocialist critique, is informed not by the dominant poststructuralist discourses of contemporary postcolonial theory, but by the Marxist anti-imperialist tradition that sought to theorize the cultural, political, and economic consequences of imperialism before, during, and after the era of decolonization. It is a tradition that was both the precondition for and the result of economic, political, and intellectual exchanges between the Global South and the Socialist Bloc from the interwar periods through the Cold War. It is these exchanges, and

the literary and cinematic works they engendered, that are the subject of this dissertation.

More specifically, in this dissertation I examine a particular body of work by the Polish journalist Ryszard Kapuściński written during the second half of the twentieth century. I take Kapuściński as the central object of my study, not only because his work chronicles the complex and shifting dynamics of these exchanges in each decade of the Cold War and in its immediate aftermath, but because no other Eastern European writer of anti-colonial reportage has been so widely translated, yet so profoundly misunderstood in the West. When Kapuściński passed away in 2007, an obituary in *The Guardian* claimed that, "[For Kapuściński] journalism was a mission, not a career, and he spent much of his life, happily, in uncomfortable and obscure places, many of them in Africa, trying to convey their essence to a continent far away" (Brittain). While a certain amount of revisionist history is perhaps to be expected of the obituary genre, such decontextualized characterizations of Kapuściński's "mission" have profound consequences for how we understand both Kapuściński's work and the Cold War context its production. *The Guardian*'s recasting of the intended audience for literary reportage as that of a unified European "continent," rather than a divided one, renders the Polish journalist's "mission" a personal, rather than a political, one. In fact, what characterized the parts of the world from which Kapuściński reported for the bulk of his career was not that they were "obscure places." Rather, they were places that the Socialist Bloc perceived to be friendly to socialism, and thus places Polish readers should learn about through the media, as part of a pedagogical program that corresponded to the Cold War-era politics of Socialist Internationalism.

This program and its complex, and at times contradictory, anti-imperialist politics has been elided by mainstream historical narratives of both the Cold War and Third World decolonization. In this dissertation I seek to help rectify this by situating Kapuściński's work within a neglected archive of Eastern European cultural encounters with the Third World, as well as by putting it in conversation with the work of an international milieu of anti-colonial writers and filmmakers (among them Richard Wright, Aimé Césaire, Gabriel García Márquez, Fernando Solanas, Octavio Getino, and Binyavanga Wainaina). In doing so I show how Kapuściński's reportage (and reportage in general) was mobilized to create a political culture of "friendship" between the Second and Third Worlds, in accordance with the Soviet Union's foreign policy.

But it is not simply that this body of work reflects Soviet Cold War strategy that interests me. The heavy-handed influence of the Soviet Union restricted the satellite states' right to national self-determination in a manner that for many (both within and without the region) seemed to be in contradiction with the Socialist Bloc's support for anti-imperialism in the Third World. This contradiction found form in works of anti-colonial reportage that did not so much describe the events on which they were assigned to report, but *narrated* them (in the privileged sense Lukács gives to the term) in a manner that combined the positivism of realism and the consciousness of modernism to represent the dialectical unfolding and working out of the contradictions of global socialism. What's more, through allegory, allusion, and intertextual and intermedial references to nineteenth-century literary works that gave voice to Poland's historical struggle against Czarist imperialism, these works expressed a content in excess of what

they reported. They expressed, I contend, the desire held by many Third World and satellite state subjects alike to develop democratic alternatives to the political systems of both the West and the Soviet Union.

This dissertation therefore seeks to offer not simply a deeper understanding of Kapuściński's oeuvre, but to reframe Cold War politics and aesthetics in terms of the dynamic history of anti-imperialism within the Socialist Bloc. By doing so I hope to provide critical insight into the ways in which the theories and experiences of postcolonialism and postsocialism intersect. In order to understand the *theoretical* relationship between postcolonialism and postsocialism, I believe we must first understand the *historical* relationship between socialism and anti-colonialism. In this sense, I follow Charad Chari and Katherine Verdery who argue for "bringing together postsocialist and postcolonial studies towards rethinking socialist and anti-colonial values simultaneously" (29).

Towards a Marxist Theory of Eastern European Coloniality/Postcoloniality

Until recently, efforts to develop a postcolonial theory of the Eastern European experience have tended to ignore the historical relationship between the Socialist Bloc and the former colonial world, but current scholarship has begun to address this gap in postsocialist studies. This scholarship draws on critical materialist interventions in postcolonial studies from the previous two decades—including the work of Timothy Brennan, Keya Ganguly, Neil Larsen, Neil Lazarus, and Benita Parry—which challenged the anti-Marxist presuppositions of the dominant, poststructuralist discourse of the discipline for too quickly disavowing the anti-imperialist tradition of Marxist theory and

practice. In his 2001 article, "The Cuts of Language: The East/West of North/South," for example, Brennan called attention to the presence of a "ghost of belief" that haunts the problem of translation, even as postcolonial theorists prefer to frame this problem as a matter of the discourse of East/West, rather than the politics of communism/anti-communism. By drawing attention to "a world of political culture that is not precisely linguistic or, for that matter, either racial or geographic" Brennan opened up space for an investigating the global production and circulation of socialist culture (41).[5] In "Postcolonial Studies between the European Wars: An Intellectual History" (2002) Brennan modeled such an investigation and its implications for postcolonial theory by offering a "mapping of influences" in the interwar period that show how Marxism, and Bolshevism in particular, "created a full-blown culture of anti-imperialism" that extended across the globe (191). [6]

Taking leads from Marxist postcolonial criticism, and taking advantage of access to archives in much of the postsocialist world, scholars in the humanities and social sciences have begun to remap the history and aesthetic production that took place during the Cold War, and in its aftermath. Recent examples this "new postsocialist thought" include a 2012 special issue of the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, "On Colonialism, Communism and East-Central Europe," edited by Dorota Kolodziejczyk and Cristina Şandru, and a 2014 special issue of the same journal titled "Alternative Solidarities:

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[5] The problem of translation and political belief is also taken up and expanded upon in Brennan's *At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now.*

[6] For more examples of Marxist postcolonial criticism see Brennan's *Borrowed Light: Vico, Hegel, and the Colonies;* Ganguly's *States of Exception: Everyday Life and Postcolonial Identity*; Larsen's *Determinations: Essays on Theory, Narrative and Nation in the Americas*; Lazarus's *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World*; Parry's *Postcolonial Studies: A Materialist Critique*, as well as work by these and other scholars in the edited volume *Marxism, Modernity and Postcolonial Studies.*

Black Diasporas and Cultural Alliances during the Cold War," edited by Monica Popescu, Cedric Tolliver, and Julie Françoise Tolliver. Several edited volumes on the topic of Cold War internationalism have been published within the past five years, including *Global Cold War Literature: Western, Eastern and Postcolonial Perspectives* (2011), *The Cold War in the Third World* (2013), *Socialist Internationalism in the Cold War: Exploring the Second World* (2016). as have a number of scholarly monographs in literary and medias studies, such as those by Joshua Malitsky, Monica Popsecu, Tobbias Rupprecht, Oscar Sanchez-Sibony, and Jamie Trnka.[7] Additionally, the Socialism Goes Global program—a research collaborative of the Universities of Belgrade, Columbia, Exeter, Leipzig, Oxford, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and University College London that studies "the relationship between decolonization and the global influence of socialism"—has organized a number of international conferences and colloquiums on the subject since the program was established in 2014.

Notably, much of this new postsocialist thought emphatically turns its attention away from the period of transition of the 1990s (i.e. the assumed postsocialist/ postcolonial moment of the region), and instead looks to the twentieth century history of socialist internationalism—a shift in temporal and geographical focus that resonates with what appears today to be postcolonial studies' renewed interest in the legacy of Bandung, the postwar period of decolonization, and the history of South-South relations (including

[7] See Malitsky's *Post-Revolution Non-Fiction Film: Building the Soviet and Cuban Nations*; Popescu's *South African Literature Beyond the Cold War*; Rupprecht's *Soviet Internationalism after Stalin: Interaction and Exchange between the USSR and Latin America during the Cold War*; Sanchez-Sibony's *Red Globalization: The Political Economy of the Soviet Cold War from Stalin to Khrushchev*; and Trnka's *Revolutionary Subjects: German Literatures and the Limits of Aesthetic Solidarity with Latin America*.

Pan-Africanism, Non-alignment, and Third Worldism). The relative autonomy of "minor" nations during the Cold War is a somewhat recent area of inquiry in the academy, and one made possible in part by the fact that fantasies of Soviet omnipotence over its international sphere of influence no longer over-determine Cold War studies. As David C. Engerman points out in his article "The Second World's Third World," Cold War historians have tended to treat the Third World "as a backdrop to Soviet–American confrontation" and Third World countries in alliance with the Soviet Union as "Soviet puppets." But the "view that Moscow directed all of its allies' actions in the Cold War is no longer sustainable. The declassification of archival materials in the 1990s in Moscow and across the former Soviet bloc . . . revealed opposition to Soviet policies both within and beyond the Soviet leadership" (183-184). The Cold War, according to Engerman, was a "fundamentally multipolar conflict, with the superpowers constantly responding not just to each other but to their allies and adversaries in the Third World" (185).

What is so far missing from these efforts to develop a "multipolar" understanding of the Cold War, however, is the role played by the so-called "satellite states" in shaping the geopolitical relations. For not only did the Eastern European People's Republics maintain their own political relations with the Third World, they did so often within the context of Soviet domination over their own national affairs. As a result, the experiences of socialism and colonialism (and anti-communism and anti-imperialism) intersected in the satellite states in problematic, but at time politically generative, ways. This dissertation aims to contribute to the new postsocialist thought by positioning the satellite state experience (and Poland's in particular) as a unique and theoretically productive

standpoint from which to understand the complex dynamics of Socialist Internationalism and anti-imperialism during the Cold War.

I make this argument by turning to the archives, yes, but also by employing the methodologies of literary studies, for which narration and representation are central. Beyond what national archives and historical accounts can offer, it is in the figurative language and intertextuality of works of reportage from "minor countries" that, I believe, our binary understanding of the Cold War is most productively challenged. As works of nonfiction, these works provide an historical document of Second World solidarity with the Third World. But as works of reportage—that is, as literary works—they also operate in the realm of metaphor and allegory, and thus construct narratives that resonate beyond their immediate documentary content. As Kapuściński explained to his Anglophone readers of his translated work at the end of the Cold War:

> In Poland every text is read as allusive, every written situation—even the most distant in space and time—is immediately, without hesitation, applied to the situation in Poland. In this way, every text is a double text, and between the printed lines we search for sympathetic messages. (qtd. in Tighe 933-934)

While this statement perhaps says more about his own authorial intention than the way "every text" is read in Poland, the existence of these "sympathetic messages" suggests that Kapuściński's reportage not only chronicled the unorthodox socialist currents emerging in the Third World, but also participated in the psychic formation of

such currents in Poland, while otherwise in the service of the official Soviet agenda.[8] While many scholars have identified the use of such "Aesopic language" in Polish and Eastern European literature, it is almost always thematized in strictly anti-communist terms: "communism colonized the political imagination of its people, but also generated a surplus: more symbolic work than the ideological system could control" (Cornis-Pope 164). I believe there is another way to read such "sympathetic messages" in Second World writing about the Third World. When approached from the theoretical standpoint of what Fredric Jameson calls the "political unconscious"—that narrative of liberation and class struggle (in this case anti-colonial struggle) that restores "to the surface of the text the repressed and buried reality of this fundamental history" (*Political Unconscious* 20)—what one finds between the lines of this body of work are narrative traces of the desire to develop democratic alternatives to the Soviet model.

The anti-imperialist narratives that I examine in this dissertation are read not through Moore's "postcolonial hermeneutic," but through what Jameson calls a "Marxist hermeneutic" that seeks to restore to these texts the political direction that motivates their energies, in order to make those energies available to us in the present.[9] I seek to perform a reading of the political unconscious of Cold War literary works (and of Kapuściński's work in particular) that takes into account the ideological contexts of both sides of the

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[8] See Cornis-Pope for a discussion of Aesopic Language in Polish literature of this period.

[9] As Jameson writes in *Marxism and Form*:

> In a more limited way, the problem of a Marxist hermeneutic arises whenever we are called upon to determine the place of what we may call right-wing literature. . . . [T]he official opinions and positions of such reactionary authors may be considered surface phenomena, rationalizations and disguises for some more basic source of energy of which, on the analogy of the Freudian model of the unconscious, they are unaware. A Marxist hermeneutic would then have the task of restoring to that energy the political direction which rightly belongs to it, of making it once more available to us" (153-154).

Iron Curtain, so as to interrupt their re-containment by postsocialist neoliberal capitalism. Such interruption is, I contend, the first step of what it means to carry out Marxist postsocialist critique. The second step is to reconstruct the problem for which these texts are symbolic solutions, and to insist that that problem is not simply the failure of "actually-existing socialism," but the contradictions of its isolated formation and attempted expansion within the context of global capitalism—for which the legacy and reconsolidation of imperialism proved to be too great an external and internal force.

Here we must must proceed cautiously, as we are beginning to wade into murky political waters. The argument that Soviet Union acted imperialistically in its relations with the Eastern European and Central Asian Republics must be carried out with extreme nuance if we do not wish to reproduce liberal (or worse) narratives about the history of the socialist project. By taking the question and experience of Soviet imperialism seriously and examining it from a Marxist postcolonial perspective, I aim to show that the embrace of market capitalism was not the only resolution to this historical problem. There were other socialist models, other socialist possibilities. The attempt to work out of such possibilities in the Second and Third Worlds during the Cold War must be understood as part of universal history of socialism as it unfolded in the twentieth century.

Thus, despite the fact that my research excavates an archive of what might be considered to be media documents rather than literature in the traditional sense, in this dissertation I am concerned not so much with the *rhetoric* of Cold War Socialist Internationalism as I am with its world-making *poetics.* I approach the archive of Second

World-Third World solidarity not as a historian, but as a literary scholar informed methodologically by the Aristotelian understanding of *poïesis*:

> The poet and the historian differ not in that one writes in meter and the other not; for one could put the writings of Herodotus into verse and they would be none the less history, with or without meter. The difference resides in this: the one speaks of what has happened, and the other of what might be. Accordingly, poetry is more philosophical and more momentous than history. The poet speaks more of the universal, while the historian speaks of particulars. (Aristotle, *Poetics* 1451a38–1451b10)

As poetic works, anti-colonial reportage brings the power of *poïesis* to bear on revolutionary praxis. By approaching the object of these reports (i.e. the global anti-imperialist movement) from the standpoint of the universal rather than the particular, history is transformed into what Susan Buck-Morss has characterized as "the porous and unbounded space in which the insurgents act" (101). This universal history makes possible historical re-mappings of resistance that serve as "an alternative to the fantasies of clashing civilizations and exclusionary redemptions" (79). Reading the documents of Second World and Third World solidarities *poetically* allows cracks and fissures to emerge in the accepted narrative of the decisive victory of market capitalism. As a result, we experience what Buck-Morss calls a "double liberation, of the historical phenomena and of our own imagination" (149). We liberate the partisans of unorthodox socialisms that never quite came into formation from the dustbin of history, and we liberate

ourselves from ideological postsocialism that too quickly concedes the total failure (both moral and economic) of the socialist project.

In what follows I explicate two concepts/terms central to the project—*internationalism* and *reportage*—and provide an overview of the dissertation chapters.

A Short History of Internationalism

In the past several years, literary studies has begun to move away from the categories of "postcolonial" and "world" literature to embrace a qualifier typically used to describe corporate business entities: transnational. As the nation state "withers away" as a result of economic globalization, and increasing numbers of people are crossing borders as immigrants and refugees, national identity has given way to a lived experience of transnationalism and a concomitant transnational culture that reflects the global flow of people, ideas, and aesthetics of the twenty-first century. Or so the argument goes. While the literary transnationalism of the post-recession world does not resound with the naïve optimism that once characterized postcolonial studies' celebration of cosmopolitanism in the era of globalization, like its recent predecessor, transnationalism assumes, and at times welcomes, the "deterritorialization" of the nation state. Much of what Brennan identified as the defining features of the cosmopolitanism of the 1990s also describes the new transnationalism: "the death of the nation-state, transculturation (rather than a merely one-sided assimilation), cultural hybridity (rather than a simplistic contrast between the foreign and the indigenous), and postmodernity (as the view that consumption is politically exciting, viable, and wholly one's own)" (*At Home* 2). And like

cosmopolitanism, transnational literary studies takes for granted "the idea that artist and state are incompatible—a belief that places the writer today in a position of antagonism to one of the major tenets of the decolonization intellectual, whose involvement in a new state formation was central and defining" (41).

Many scholars working in the new postsocialist thought have embraced the transnational turn in literary studies and position their research object—Cold War internationalism—as an example of transnationalism *avant la lettre*. For example, in her recent book, *Revolutionary Subjects: German Literatures and the Limits of Aesthetic Solidarity with Latin America,* Jamie Trnka asks, "How does the emergence of transnational subjects prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall challenge existing accounts of transnationalism as a post-Cold War phenomenon commonly associated with the accelerated proliferation of global media and the intensification of economic exchange?" (9). By examining the way in which "thematic, textual, and/or aesthetic forms and traditions" moved across borders and boundaries (32)—namely between the DDR and Latin America—Trnka aims to broaden our periodization of literary transnationalism as a twenty-first century phenomenon.

While I agree with Trnka that the study of Cold War internationalism provides an alternative lens through which to study transnational literature, in my work I take pains to avoid collapsing the two concepts. Far from being a neutral term to describe flows of "aesthetic forms and traditions," transnationalism is, I believe, mythologized language (to borrow the term from Barthes). There are political reasons it has found favor at the present juncture, while a concept like internationalism has fallen out of use.

Transnationalism is the language of global capital, and internationalism the language of global socialism. As a twentieth century political project and ontological experience, internationalism is thus distinct from (indeed, antagonistic towards) twenty-first century transnationalism.

Internationalism was a nationally-grounded, but programmatically global, agenda of political solidarity dating back to the First International, which formed in the aftermath of the repression of Europe's 1848 revolutions. Notably, the early gatherings of what would become the First International took place in London at a meeting commemorating the 1863 Polish uprising against the Russian Empire. In the mid-nineteenth century many socialists, including Marx, saw Polish freedom fighters as exemplars of revolutionary internationalism. Poles were, according to Marx:

> [T]he only European people that has fought and is fighting as the cosmopolitan soldier of the revolution. Poland shed its blood during the American War of Independence; its legions fought under the banner of the first French Republic; by its revolution of 1830 it prevented the invasion of France that had been decided by the partitioners of Poland; in 1846 in Cracow it was the first in Europe to plant the banner of social revolution; in 1848 it played an outstanding part in the revolutionary struggle in Hungary, Germany, and Italy; finally, in 1871 it supplied the Paris Commune with its best generals and most heroic soldiers. (MECW, vol. 24, 57–58; italics in original)

A few years earlier Marx had argued that Polish uprisings against the nation's imperialist partitioners—and the 1846 socialist-leaning Krakow insurrection in particular—served as a "glorious example to the whole of Europe, by identifying the national cause with the democratic cause and the emancipation of the oppressed class" (MECW, vol. 6, 549).[10]

While the First International emerged in part out of an effort to establish working-class solidarity between Western and Eastern Europe, the Second International, which emerged following the "red and black split" of the aftermath of the Paris Commune, encompassed a much broader geographic scope—establishing May 1st as International Workers Day in solidarity with the martyrs of Chicago Haymarket affair and including parties in Latin America. Arguably, the ideals of internationalism found their fullest expression when the politics of socialism and decolonization came into contact with one another during to the interwar Third International, or Comintern. In "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination" (published in 1916), Lenin argued for a revolutionary strategy that would link the struggle of the European proletariat with anti-colonial movements the world over:

> The proletariat cannot but fight against the forcible retention of the oppressed nations within the boundaries of a given state, and this is exactly what the struggle for the right of self-determination means. The proletariat must demand the right of political secession for the colonies and for the nations that 'its own' nation oppresses. Unless it does this, proletarian internationalism will remain a meaningless phrase; mutual

[10] For an extended discussion of Marx's thoughts on the "Polish Question," See Anderson, *Marx on the Margins: On Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Non-Western Societies*.

> confidence and class solidarity between the workers of the oppressing and oppressed nations will be impossible (146).

A few years later in 1920, in what would come to be the handbook of the Third International, *The ABC of Communism*, Nikolai Bukharin and Evgenii Preobrazhensky drew upon Lenin's ideas to argue that the anti-capitalist struggle was inseparable from the anti-imperialist one, and celebrated the threat anti-colonial movements posed to the international capitalist order. Drawing attention to colonial uprisings and wars in India, Egypt, and Ireland, they remarked with no shortage of enthusiasm that "Enslaved countries are beginning to fight against their 'civilized' European slave-drivers. To the civil war, the class war waged by the proletariat against the imperialist bourgeoisie, there are superadded colonial risings which help to undermine and destroy the dominion of world-wide imperialism" (137). They go on to explain that, "the Communist Party, therefore, wishing to put an end for ever to all forms of national oppression and national inequality, voices the demand for the national right of self-determination" (207).

It was in the spirit of undermining the imperialist bourgeoisie and supporting national self-determination struggles that the Comintern sponsored the founding conference of the League Against Imperialism in February 1927. Two hundred delegates from thirty-seven states and colonies met in Brussels to discuss the effects of imperialism in their corners of the world, and to assert their organization as an anti-imperialist repost to the recently founded League of Nations. (Prashad 20).[11] In the 1920s the Comintern

[11] While not all in attendance were affiliated with communist parties, it was not simply a matter of red baiting when the colonial powers denounced the League Against Imperialism as a communist front organization. The conference had been organized in large part by two Berlin-based communists — Willi Munzenberg and Virendranath Chattopadhyaya — and many in attendance came as delegates from

resolved to support national liberation movements, even if it meant forming a temporary alliance with the bourgeoisie of the colonized world. A couple of months after the League Against Imperialism conference, however, the Comintern changed its position. In response to the April 1927 Shanghai Massacre of thousands of communists by China's Kuomintang government, non-communist anti-colonial movements would no longer be supported. This position was held by the Third International until its collapse in 1935, and was followed by the Soviet foreign policy of a United Front against fascism.[12] After World War Two, at the February 1956 Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party, the Soviet Union returned to a policy under which all anti-imperialists (communist or otherwise) were embraced as potential allies.

This decision was largely in response to the April 1955 Bandung Conference, where 29 leaders of decolonizing world countries had gathered in Indonesia to condemn Western imperialism in its various guises. While the West cast a suspicious and wary eye towards the conference in Bandung, the Socialist Bloc emphatically supported it. Paraphrasing the spirit of deliberations at the conference one Polish newspaper headline read: "United in Our Common Hatred of Colonialism and Racism, United in Our Will to Strengthen Peace" (*Sztandar Młodych* 2; April 19, 1955). Of course, the "we" here did not formally include any countries of the Socialist Bloc. Only politicians and activists from Asian and African nations were present at Bandung as delegates. [13] Headlines such

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Communist and Socialist parties that had been founded in the early 1920s after the Soviet Union hosted the First Congress of the People's of the East in September 1920 (Prashad 21).

[12] For more on the dynamic history of Soviet internationalism in the 1930s see Katerina Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931-1941.*

[13] Nor did it include, contrary to popular misconception, the leader of socialist Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito. Tito would later host the founding conference of the Non-Aligned Movement in Belgrade in 1961.

as these reflected the newspaper's efforts to interpellate Polish readers as resolutely anti-imperialist in accordance with the Soviet position. At the same time, they also seemed to gesture self-referentially to Poland's status as a Soviet satellite state.

Figure 0.1: A political cartoon in a Polish newspaper lampoons the West's accusation of something like "reverse racism" on the part of those attending the Bandung Conference. (*Sztandar Młodych*; April 21, 1955).

While the Soviet Union's relationship to the republics within its borders and its satellite states was not considered by the United Nations to be an imperialist one, and was thus not met with resounding critique at Bandung, the question of Soviet imperialism had been raised at the conference. Said Schamyl and Isa Yusuf Alptekin, presenting themselves as leaders of "The Moslem Nations under USSR Imperialism," and claiming to represent Azerbaijan, North-Caucasia, Idil-Ural, Crimea, and Turkestan, put forward a memorandum in which they called upon the Bandung conference to support their region's

struggle against the "oppression, torture, massacres and mass-deportations" perpetrated against the people of the republic by the Soviet Union (qtd. in Patil 84). When the organizers of the conference chose not to include their cause in the Bandung agenda and no resolutions against Soviet imperialism were passed, Schamyl denounced the conference in a final memorandum, stating, "The Bandung conference dealt with the problems concerning the East from one angle unfortunately, and they passed silently on the rightful question of the dependent peoples of the East in the Red Russian Imperialism, . . . their Brothers Behind the Iron Curtain" (84). The following year in Eastern Europe the Soviet Union's official politics of anti-imperialism would again appear to be at odds with the lived reality within the bloc. After the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, many Third World leaders turned a more critical eye towards intra-Socialist Bloc imperialism.

Of course, it would also be a gross oversimplification to represent the Soviet Union as an imperialist *tout court.* As Moore acknowledges, "in judging if the Soviets were colonizers, one must consider numerous dimensions," which include the following:

> Lenin and his Commissar of Nationalities, Joseph Stalin, developed an approach, "nationalist in form, socialist in content," that offered an alternative to the then current imperial, colonial, caste-based, universalist, and melting-pot ideologies. . . . Those who would characterize the Soviet experiment as noncolonial can point, inter alia, to the Soviet Union's wish to liberate its toiling masses; its dismantling of many ethnic-Russian privileges in its east and south; its support of many Union languages; its development of factories, hospitals, and schools; its liberation of women

> from the harem and the veil[14]; its support of Third World anti-colonial struggles. (122)

For Moore the point is that that multiple dimensions of Soviet imperialism/anti-imperialism seem to cancel each other out, making it impossible to ontologize the postsocialist condition as postcolonial in any strict sense of the term. But when examining the political valences of anti-imperialism within the Socialist Bloc during the Cold War, Moore's both/and characterization of the problem is of limited use. Rather than treat "actually existing socialism" as either in conflict or in accordance with the anti-imperialist ideals it formally espoused, I aim to approach the problem dialectically, much as Frantz Fanon did in *Wretched of the Earth.*

In the well-known chapter, "Concerning Violence," Fanon recognized how critical the affinities between the Socialist Bloc and the Third World were to the global anticolonial struggle:

> In 1952, the 200,000 victims of the repression in Kenya could meet with relative indifference. This was because the international contradictions were not sufficiently distinct. Already the Korean and Indo-Chinese wars had begun a new phase. But it is above all Budapest and Suez which constitute the decisive moments of this confrontation. Strengthened by the unconditional support of the socialist countries, the colonized peoples fling themselves with whatever arms they have against the impregnable citadel of colonialism. (79)

[14] Moore's characterization of the Soviet Union's "liberation of women" from the veil as an argument *against* understanding the Soviet Union as imperialism is, of course, highly problematic, if not contradictory.

What's remarkable about the above passage is the way it points to the central contradiction of Socialist Internationalism by naming the failed Hungarian Revolution a decisive moment in the global anti-imperialist movement, while at the same time also emphasizing the importance of Soviet support for Third World liberation struggles ("Strengthened by the unconditional support of the socialist countries"). Fanon's words here capture the dual valences of Socialist Bloc Internationalism in the mid-1950s as it came to encompass both the Soviet agenda of maintaining a global sphere of influence by lending military and economic support to certain Third World countries, and the on-going interest on the part of certain Eastern European satellite states in developing the kinds of national paths to socialism that were emerging in the decolonizing world.[15]

These two faces of Socialist Bloc solidarity with the Third World invite us to, "think solidarity politically," as David Featherstone suggests in *Solidarity: Hidden Histories and Geographies of Internationalism*. Solidarities, Featherstone contends,

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[15] In fact, the economic and cultural legacy of the imperialist domination over Poland by Czarist Russia had been a concern of the Communist Party dating back to the Third International. Bukharin and Preobrazhensky were aware of the challenges Russia's imperialist past posed for worldwide socialist revolution. In *The ABC*, they address this problem in terms of the "Polish question":

> Our tsarist government oppressed the Poles, and the population of Poland has continued to cherish mistrust of all Russians; not merely of the Russian tsar, the Russian landlord, and the Russian capitalist. If we are to eradicate the mistrust felt by the workers of oppressed nations for the workers of oppressor nations, we must not merely proclaim national equality, but must realize it in practice. This equality must find expression in the granting of equal rights in the matter of language, education, religion, etc. Nor is this all. The proletariat must be ready to grant complete national self-determination, must be ready, that is, to concede to the workers who form the majority in any nation the full right to decide the question whether that nation is to be completely integrated with the other, or is to be federated with it, or is to be entirely separated from it. (203-204)

The Polish Question was a critical one in the interwar period. Wary of the right-wing religiously-tinged nationalism brewing in her native land, Rosa Luxembourg famously argued that Poland and other East-Central European nations should only be granted national independence if left forces would come to power. Lenin, on the other hand, supported the unconditional right to independence as the first step in fostering a Polish socialist movement.

> are not just part of binding together pre-existing communities. They can be much more active in shaping political contestation than this suggests. In this sense solidarities can be part of the process of politicization. . . . [They] can open up new political terrains and possibilities, . . . [and allow] new conceptions of political subjects and actors to emerge. (7)

It is the emergence of new political subjects (and subjectivities) both within and without the Socialist Bloc that makes the Cold War politics of internationalism so compelling.

These subjects, it must be noted, have not always leaned towards solidarity with the colonized world. In their efforts of give voice to the Polish struggle against its imperialist partitioners, Romantic Poets, like Adam Mickiewicz, and Positivist writers of the subsequent generation, like Henryk Sienkiewicz, wrote nostalgically about the lost grandeur of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth that controlled vast territories from the seventeenth century through the eighteenth century—a kingdom that in effect colonized Ukrainian territories. And when Poland regained nationhood after World War One, imperialist aspirations were rekindled through the program of The Maritime and Colonial League (Ligi Morskiej i Kolonialnej), established in 1930, which advocated for the idea of a Polish colony in Africa or Latin America (Grądzka 10-11). In the eyes of many Poles, to be a modern European nation was to possess overseas colonies. With the onset of World War Two and the political transformation that followed, such aspirations quickly became moot. And within a couple of decades socialist government officials, schools, and the media would make every effort to redirect Polish political and cultural identification away from the imperialist countries and towards solidarity with the

colonized/decolonizing Third World—despite the potentially destabilizing effects that anti-imperialist politics might create if applied locally.

Poland's shifting relationship to imperialist/anti-imperialist ideologies makes clear that "The ways in which internationalisms envision and construct relations between places are not a fixed backdrop to internationalist politics. Rather, they are generated and can shape the character of political relations envisioned through internationalism in significant ways" (Featherstone 57). Socialist Internationalism therefore should not be understood as a fixed political agenda from which arose a series of global relations. Rather, it should be treated as a fluid and porous concept, grounded in a set of guiding principles—dignity, equality, and autonomy for people of all nations—and shaped and delimited by changing economic and political conditions. By approaching the history of Socialist Internationalism from the standpoint of the satellite states, and thus neither ignoring Soviet domination over its Eastern European periphery nor cynically dismissing Socialist Bloc support for the former Third World as a matter of geopolitical maneuvering, I (much like Fanon) seek to hold socialism and anti-imperialism together in a state of unresolved tension. In this tension I find evidence of not simply a hypocritical disjuncture between "actually existing socialism" and its supposed anti-imperialist ideologies, but a contradiction out of which of a more democratic socialist consciousness could have, and occasionally did, emerge—in literary form, if not often in political practice.

A Marxist Literary Theory of Reportage

Reportage was among the major aesthetic forms to emerge out of the politics of Socialist Internationalism. Reportage lent itself to the politics of internationalism by offering writers a dialectical form through which to represent the relationship between the local and the global, and thereby both document and facilitate the rapidly shifting transnational solidarities of the Cold War era. While most studies of postwar reportage tend to focus on American New Journalism, in this dissertation I develop a new genealogy of the genre that shows how reportage—nurtured in the interwar Soviet avant-garde—became a formal paradigm of transnational documentary (both literary and cinematic) in the second half of the twentieth century due to the circulation of people and ideas committed to the project of international socialism.

I use the term "reportage" despite the fact that it is somewhat vague to Anglophone readers. It is the term used (with some linguistic variation) by countries in the region with which this dissertation is concerned, Eastern Europe, and the term the writer most central to my project, Ryszard Kapuściński, used to describe his own work. It is, to be sure, an umbrella term that encompasses a range of literary practices that often go by other names: narrative nonfiction, literary journalism, travel writing, factography (a Soviet practice that will be explored in chapter one), *feuilleton* in France, *testimonio* in Latin American. In its most basic sense, reportage refers to a range of genres that blend literary devices with nonfiction or journalistic content. One of its defining features is its tendency to draw attention to its formal qualities alongside, if not over and above, its journalistic content. Although it has one foot firmly planted in the realist literary

tradition, it frequently mobilizes techniques associated with modernism—shifting points of view, interior monologue, stream-of-consciousness—that allow it to occupy an in-between space in the realism/modernism binary.

In literary fiction, precursors to the genre are to be found in the nineteenth century novel—in the milieu studies of Balzac and the Naturalism of Emile Zola, for example, as well as in Charles Baudelaire's exaltation of the *Painter of Modern Life*. Zola in particular made use of reportage techniques in his novels, techniques he likened to the scientific cataloging and organization of empirical evidence rooted in Enlightenment thought. For Baudelaire, reportage as a literary and artistic technique was inseparable from the phenomenon of industrial metropolis— an urban space that gave birth to the figure of the *flâneur* for whom scenes of modern everyday life were now deemed worthy of aesthetic appreciation and representation. In the twentieth century, German novelists like Alfred Döblin and Ernst Ottwalt also made use of the reportage technique in their works of fiction about urban life.

Reportage therefore may refer not only to a specific genre but to a form of writing—a documentarian aesthetic—that may find its way into other kinds of works, including visual ones. The history of the emergence of literary reportage is intertwined with that of photographic and cinematic reportage. In the early twentieth century, technological advancements in photography and cinema radically shaped modern modes of perception, and the emergence of reportage as a major literary genre is best understood not only as conterminous with the rise of visual forms of reportage, but as registering the influence of the cinematic-eye of documentary films on literature and print media. In fact,

in many Slavic languages (including Polish) reportage is a cross-medial term used to refer to both literature and cinema. This linguist non-specificity preserves, philologically, the historiographic and aesthetic impracticality of separating the genre according to medium.

Methodologically, reportage is frequently a literary record of the writer's immersion in a particular place, culture, or social substratum, and as such it has an important relationship to early anthropological and ethnographic writing, as well as other forms of travel writing. But it is also distinct from these genres. Reportage preserves within it the word “report” and, along with it, both the event which is reported and the figure of the reporter. This is not the figure of the scientist, nor of the bourgeois explorer who individually pursues and consumes cultural difference in order to cultivate worldliness in himself and his readers. It is the work of those reporting on events of global significance—be they wars, decolonization struggles, or guerilla movements. And yet, reportage is only partially defined as a literary-inflected report. While the genre shares journalism's conceit of nonfiction (i.e. reporting on real-world events and everyday life), the subjective experience and the point of view of the writer are foregrounded rather than suppressed in the service of so-called objectivity.

For this reason, Marxists theorists have long debated the viability of reportage as a socialist aesthetic form in terms of its ability (or inability) to represent the dialectical subject/object relation. Its strengths and weaknesses as a genre were to be found in its ambivalent relationship to the reproduction of reified life. While their assessments of the genre diverged in significant ways, interwar Marxist critics György Lukács, Siegfried

Kracauer, Ernst Bloch, and Walter Benjamin believed that the critical standpoint of a work of reportage was to be found neither solely in the work's content nor in the political ideology of the writer. When employed as a stylistic trick in popular interwar German novels (such as those by Ernst Ottwalt), reportage was, for Lukács, at best, an empty formalism and, at worst, a profoundly un-dialectical genre in which the surface reality of things is rendered as indistinguishable from reality. That which is portrayed (or rather, reported on) thus takes on a "fetishistic and rigidified form of appearance" (Lukács, "Reportage or Portrayal" 56). If literature, reportage or otherwise, was to provide for the proletariat the consciousness-constituting role it did for the bourgeoisie in the period of its ascendency—that is, if it was to aid in the mediation of subject and object, particular and whole, necessary for the overcoming of reified consciousness—it had to provide a dialectical representation of the social totality.

The ability of a work of reportage to challenge rather than reproduce reified life depended upon whether the work's representation of reality served to demystify capitalist social relations at the level of both form and content. Politically-committed reportage, whatever its specific content, must endeavor to demystify the relationship of the individual and individual phenomena to the social whole on a formal level by rendering the subject/object relationship as dialectically unfolding. The writer of reportage was thus tasked with both inhabiting and moving beyond everyday life.[16] For Benjamin the work of Soviet reportage writers (or more specifically, "factographers") was especially

[16] This task was in many respects already conceived of by Benjamin in his early neo-Kantian writings in terms of the distinction between *Erlebnis* (experience as that which one has simply lived through or witnessed) and *Erfahrung* (a higher order of experience through which one acquires spiritual knowledge). This distinction would later inform his writings on the reportage form as practiced by the German and Soviet avant-gardes.

promising in this regard. They did not merely report on everyday life, but participated in it and helped to organize it (e.g. on collective farms where factographers often lived and worked for months at a time), and in doing so re-tooled the formal apparatus of literary production and reception through the blending of genres, as well as the blending of the roles of reporter and the reported on subject.[17]

Concurrent with these theoretical debates about the genre among interwar Marxist theorists, communist journalists practiced reportage by reporting on strikes and uprisings for socialist periodicals, and by traveling to the colonized world to report on anti-imperialists struggle for politically sympathetic European and American audiences. Before he became an international communist celebrity for *Ten Days That Shook the World*, John Reed witnessed and wrote about the Mexican Revolution in 1914.[18] Larisa Reisner, who both reported on and fought in the October Revolution and Spartacus Revolution, wrote a work of reportage in 1921 about her mission in Afghanistan as a Soviet diplomat.[19] Sergei Treti'akov toured and wrote about China from 1924 to 1925. Claude McKay traveled to and wrote about North Africa in the 1920s and 1930s.[20] Langston Hughes chronicled his travels to Soviet Central Asia in 1932, marveling at the progress the region had made since throwing off British domination.[21] And the Czech

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[17] See Benjamin, "The Author as Producer."
[18] See Reed, *Insurgent Mexico*.
[19] See Reisner, *Afghanistan*. In an obituary to Reisner, Karl Radek wrote, "There in the mountains of Afghanistan she felt herself a part of the world revolution and prepared for a new struggle. Her book *Afghanistan* shows the widening of her horizon, how from being a Russian revolutionist she became a fighter in the international proletarian army" (267). See "Larisa Reisner, 1927" in Radek, *Portraits and Pamphlets*.
[20] See McKay, *A Long Way from Home*.
[21] See Hughes, *A Negro Looks at Soviet Central Asia*.

journalist Egon Erwin Kisch traveled throughout North Africa and Asia, reporting from both a socialist and anti-colonial standpoint.[22]

For Kisch, the genre's literariness coupled with its journalistic claims to the representation of social reality made reportage, "a dangerous literary genre." In an introduction to an edited volume of his work, Kisch explains this assessment by recalling a trip to Ceylon. En route he read about the beauty of the island in travel guides, tourist brochures, and literary travelogues, but "when I got to compare all this literature with the living reality, I was overcome by fear and disgust. I saw an island where at least 30,000 children die of malaria and malnutrition between October and January, where 80 percent of all children are starving to such an extent they are too weak to go to school, where people are whipped daily." The travel books and brochures had spoken of "the beauty of the island of pearls, about the thunder of the surf, about the eternal rustle of the jungle, about the ruins of ancient imperial palaces, . . . yet not a word about the abominable, terrible everyday life" ("A Dangerous Literary Genre" 91). Kisch notes that while the authors of these accounts are not necessarily lying to put forward such descriptions—the natural beauty of the island does indeed exist—they are politically mistaken in their literary object-choices.

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[22] After the publication of his first edited collection, *The Raging Reporter* (*Der rasende Reporter*) (1924), Kisch became one of the most prominent writers of the genre in the German language. In 1925 and 1926, he traveled to the Soviet Union and published a series of reportage sketches titled *Tsars, Priests and Bolsheviks* (*Zaren, Popen, Bolschewiken*) in 1927. That same year he traveled to North Africa, publishing *Worldwide Exploits* (*Wagnisse in aller Welt*), a collection of essays about colonial exploitation in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco. In subsequent works, Kisch reported from the United States, China, Soviet Central Asia, Australia, the Spanish Civil War, and Mexico, where he lived in exile during World War Two. When he died in 1948, in what was now communist Czechoslovakia, the new regime embraced him as a model socialist writer. For more on Kisch's life and work see Harold B. Segel, *Egon Erwin Kisch: A Bio-Anthology* (1997). All quotes from Kisch's work are taken from this volume.

And yet, for Kisch the antidote to such aestheticized bourgeois travel writing is not simply to exchange the beauty of the island for its misery. The writer who tries "simply to record" this misery shows a lack of literary imagination and thus risks falling into "banality" and righteously indignant "demagogy" (92). Reportage is thus a dangerous literary genre for the politically-committed writer who must somehow avoid the pitfalls of both over and under aestheticization of their subject. "It is hard, my friends, much harder than many of your think, to present the truth accurately, without sacrificing artistic form or vitality" (92), Kisch cautions. Reportage must somehow be both aesthetically appealing and demystifying of social relations. Only in this way can it be a "dangerous genre" in a revolutionary sense.

Kisch had a somewhat unlikely admirer in Lukács, who was otherwise unconvinced of the dialectical qualities of the reportage form. For Lukács, Kisch's writing represented a "new type of reportage" through which "the wealth of today's reality speaks" ("Der Meister der Reportage," 49).[23] Although he generally found the attempt to "apply" Marxist politics to nonfiction literary forms to result in an unfortunate "aesthetic of gray on gray," in Kisch's reportage the "literary unmasking of capitalism" took the form of "colorfully-written episodes, [in which] the drives of historic forces are made visible" ("Der Meister der Reportage," 50). Clarifying a rebuke of the genre he had made a few years prior in the essay "Reportage or Portrayal?" (1932), Lukács explained, "The author of these lines has always been against the application of the creative method of reportage in the novel or dramatic literature. . . . If I now call Egon Erwin Kisch the Master of the legitimate and important form of reportage, . . . [it is because] this struggle

[23] Translations of "Der Meister der Reportage" mine.

against the mutual weakening of the creative method through unorganized, eclectic mixtures is at the same time a struggle for a real, decisive form of reportage" ("Der Meister der Reportage," 51).

In the wake of World War Two, when a world-historical wave of national liberation movements shook the globe, reportage once again emerged as a "dangerous literary genre" for the "literary unmasking" of global capitalism by many fellow travelers of anti-colonial movements. Writing from positions of solidarity with these movements, many well-known writers of the Cold War era turned to this hybrid form to report on and galvanize support for Third World struggles. The content of reportage not only reflected the broader political agendas of the Soviet Union, the Non-Aligned Movement, and Tricontinentalism, but the formal techniques of narrative nonfiction also developed in conjunction with political upheaval in the socialist and decolonizing worlds.

While a broad comparative study of interwar and Cold War communist reportage would be a worthwhile (if unwieldy) project, I take Ryszard Kapuściński's oeuvre as the primary object of my study because my larger political and intellectual objective in this dissertation is to develop and advance Marxist postsocialist critique by bringing Marxist postcolonial theory to bear on readings of Cold War-era Eastern European texts. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Kapuściński's literary career spanned the length of the Cold War and its aftermath. The shifting geographical focus of his writing—from India to Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and the former Soviet Union—maps critical developments in the politics of global socialism vis-à-vis colonialism, neocolonialism, and neoliberalism, while also evincing formal changes to the text that reflect these

developments. Moreover, Kapuściński is celebrated as a national hero in a former satellite state that is nationally and internationally regarded as having waged a righteous and successful struggle against Soviet communism, and his work engages both directly and indirectly with the semi-peripheral positionality of the satellite state. By demonstrating that much of his writing been misread and misrecognized as it moved not only from East to West via linguistic and cultural translation, but from socialism to postsocialism within Poland itself, I aim to demonstrate the critical potential of the "Marxist hermeneutic" for postsocialist studies.

Among English-speaking readers Kapuściński is perhaps best known for *The Emperor*: *Downfall of an Autocrat* (*Cesarz*) (1978; 1983 in English), a fantastical account of Haile Selassie's Ethiopian dictatorship that was at the time of its publication widely interpreted by readers both within and without Poland to be a thinly-veiled allegory for life under Polish socialism. This work endeared Kapuściński to the anti-communist West as yet another Eastern European literary dissident. The translations that followed, including *The Soccer War* (1992), *Imperium* (1993), and *The Shadow of the Sun* (2002), solidified this position, but also (as I will discuss in chapter five), in the case of the latter two works, elicited legitimate charges of orientalism and racism by multiple reviewers.

And yet, for much of Kapuściński's literary career his work was of a decidedly socialist and anti-colonial character. From the late 1950s to the late 1970s, he wrote countless essays about Third World national liberation struggles and guerilla movements for Polish periodicals, many of which were republished in book-length volumes. These books include *Gdyby cała Afryka* (*If All Africa...*) (1969), about the decolonization

struggles of several African countries; *Dlaczego zginął Karl von Spreti* (*Why Karl von Spreti Was Killed*) (1970), about the kidnapping and murder of the West German ambassador to Guatemala by leftist guerillas; *Chrystus z karabinem na ramieniu* (*Christ With a Rifle on His Shoulder*) (1975), about guerilla movements in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East; and *Jeszcze dzień życia* (*Another Day of Life*) (1976), about the decolonization of Angola. With the exception of the last title, none of these books have been published in English. When selected essays from some of these works were later reprinted in the volume *Wojna futbolowa* (*The Soccer War*) (published in Polish in 1978, and in English in 1992), many were edited or otherwise revised in a manner that downplayed (and in some cases, removed) the explicitly socialist and anti-imperialist politics of the original texts. I therefore seek to resituate Kapuściński's reportage in terms of the politics and aesthetics of Socialist Internationalism from which it emerged, and in so doing to read this body of work as an expression of the shifting valences of anti-imperialism and internationalism during the Cold War and in its immediate aftermath.

Of course, a thorough study of the original context of Kapuściński's reportage would want to situate his work in the context of his national literary tradition, the Polish School of Reportage. This literary tradition includes the work of interwar war correspondent Melchior Wańkowicz, postwar writer Marian Brandys, and Kapuściński's contemporaries, Hanna Krall, Krzysztof Kąkolewski, and Wojciech Giełżyński.[24] Today, a list of Polish reportage writers currently writing in the tradition of the Polish School would include Artur Domosławski, Jacek Hugo-Bader, Andrzej Stasiuk, Mariusz

[24] Of these authors only Giełżyński also traveled to and wrote about the Third World.

Szczygieł, and Wojciech Tochman, among others. But as compelling as this body of work may be, positioning Kapuściński's writing as representative of the Polish School of Reportage, is not the focus of my project, as this work has already been carried out by both Polish and Anglophone scholars.[25] Moreover, many of critics of the Polish School of Reportage attribute the cultural significance of the reportage form in Poland to the history of censorship by the socialist government, which required that writers develop strategies for "subverting the documentary techniques of communist propaganda and using them for other ends" (Greenberg 130). Rather than understanding the genealogy of reportage as part of the socialist project, these scholars understand it as having emerged in opposition to it.

When it is approached from a transnational perspective, Polish reportage is frequently represented as having emerged from cultural contact with the West, as though it were a derivation of American New Journalism. Diana Kuprel claims that "Poland served as a land-bridge whereby Western culture and ideas could filter through to other Eastern-block countries. . . . This openness to the West was crucial, historically, to the evolution of the Polish press" (377). Susan Greenberg is even more emphatic. She argues that Polish reporters developed a literary journalistic style of writing in an effort to emulate the West, made possible by émigré networks in the United States:

> The diaspora created by the flight for safety abroad, combined with the

[25] See Greenberg and Kuprel. Additionally, dozens of works on Kapuscinski's life and work have been published in Polish, including Kazimierz Wolny-Zmorzyński, *O twórczości Ryszarda Kapuścińskiego. Próba interpretacji*; Zbigniew Bauer, *Antymedialny reportaż Ryszarda Kapuścińskiego*; Beata Nowacka, *Magiczne dziennikarstwo: Ryszard Kapuściński woczach krytyków*; and Magdalena Horodecka, *Zbieranie głosów: Sztuka opowiadania Ryszarda Kapuścińskiego*.

> critical mass afforded by a large population at home, resulted in a far-flung network of political, cultural and religious leaders interested in working with their Polish counterparts to reckon with the country's past. And despite the many difficulties of the Cold War, the Catholic Church provided an umbrella for independent action during that period, while support in the West for Polish dissidents left a legacy of connectedness. (135)

These national and the (Western-oriented) transnational approaches to understanding Kapuściński's work are partial and imprecise at best. At worst, they reproduce the black and white logic of ideological postsocialism that assumes all Cold War culture worth celebrating could only have emerged in opposition to "actually existing socialism," rather than from within it. To counter these discourses, I choose to read Kapuściński's reportage not primarily as an expression of a Polish literary tradition, but rather as an expression of a socialist aesthetic—a socialist realist aesthetic, even (as I will discuss in chapter one)—that dates back to the interwar Marxist debates about the genre, but whose form and content were emphatically shaped both by experimentation within the early Soviet avant-garde, and cross-cultural encounters between the Second and Third Worlds. By forgoing a narrow area studies approach to my research objects, a theoretical space for examining the political aesthetics of not just Kapuściński's work, but of the reportage genre as such, opens up that would otherwise remain unavailable.

Chapter Overview

In order to chart the effects of the changing geopolitical conditions on the form and content of reportage, this dissertation moves chronologically from the mid-1950s' moment of Bandung and the Thaw, to the Non-Aligned Movement in Africa, Latin American Tricontinentalism and global '68, and finally to the collapse of the Socialist Bloc and the triumph of neoliberal globalization.

In Chapter One: The Waiting Room of History: Reportage and the (Re)Building of International Socialism, I examine the ways literary and filmic reportage both challenged and recuperated progress narratives associated with Soviet-style development in the Second and Third Worlds. I begin by discussing Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's 1955 visit to Warsaw, just one year shy of the cataclysmic events of the Socialist Bloc Thaw, before turning my attention to two documentary representations of Poland's flagship steel mill, Nowa Huta—Kapuściński's 1955 article "To też jest prawda o Nowej Hucie" ("This Too Is True of Nowa Huta") (1955) and Maksymilian Wrocławski's "Czarna seria" ("Black Series") documentary, *Miejsce zamieszkania* (*Place of Residence*) (1957). I argue that these works attest to a neo-avant-garde and intermedial Thaw aesthetics of reportage that sought to represent the "truth" of the Polish socialist experience. At the end of the chapter I examine Kapuściński's 1956 photo-reportage about India (his first assignment abroad) to show how Socialist Bloc anti-colonialism in the Thaw-era went hand in hand with the simultaneous exportation and repudiation of the Soviet development model abroad.

In Chapter Two: Black Stars, Red Stars: Anti-Colonial Constellations in Cold War Africa, I examine Kapuściński's *Czarne gwiazdy* (*Black Stars*) (1963), a collection of reportage essays about the decolonization of Ghana and the Belgian Congo.[26] I put these essays in conversation with the writing of Richard Wright and C.L.R. James to trace the influence of the biographical form on the literature of anti-colonial solidarity, and of Kapuściński's work in particular, as he sought to construct socialist heroes out of the figures Kwame Nkrumah and Patrice Lumumba and to create solidarity between Poles and Africans on the basis of a shared subaltern identity. I then show how Kapuściński's efforts to galvanize Polish support for Africa's decolonization also called attention—through the use of literary allusion and intertextuality—to struggles for national autonomy within the Socialist Bloc.

In Chapter Three: Toward a Second World Third Cinema, I develop a concept of Second World Third Cinema by examining Tadeusz Jaworski's documentary short film, *80 dni Lumumby* (*80 Days of Lumumba*) (1962), one of five films in Jaworski's *Afryka '60* series, in terms of its political and aesthetic resonances with Fernando Solanas's and Octavio Getino's concept of Third Cinema.[27] *80 Days of Lumumba* documents the rise and fall of Patrice Lumumba in a manner that transforms the late Prime Minister of the Republic of Congo into a martyr of both the anti-colonial and socialist causes. Through my analysis of this film, I make a case for a concept of Second World Third Cinema

[26] Part of this chapter was published in October 2016 in the journal *Postcolonial Studies*, under the title, "Black Stars, Red Stars: Anti-Colonial Constellations in Ryszard Kapuściński's Cold War Reportage" (vol. 19, no. 2, 131-149).

[27] Part of this chapter was published in August 2016 in the journal *Studies in Eastern European Cinema*, under the title, "Toward a Second World Third Cinema: Anti-colonial Internationalism in Tadeusz Jaworski's *80 Days of Lumumba*" (vol. 7, no. 3, 190-207).

understood not only as socialist cinema of solidarity with Third World struggles, but also as an allegorical mode of representation that championed the suppressed politics of national self-determination within the Socialist Bloc itself. In doing so, I show how a concept like Second World Third Cinema calls upon film scholars to reconsider Eastern European cinema in a global context, and world cinema in an Eastern European context.

In Chapter Four: Guerrilla Reportage in the Era of Tricontinentalism, I examine how the gaze of the guerrilla diarist became a new generic touchstone for anti-colonial reportage in the era of Tricontinentalism. Drawing on the work of Ernesto "Che" Guevara, Umberto Eco, and Régis Debray, I argue that the diary form lent itself to the development of a self-reflexive journalistic style capable of critiquing the mass media. I then show how Kapuściński's writing in the 1970s—in volumes like *Chrystus z karabinem na ramieniu* (*Christ with A Rifle on His Shoulder*) (1975) and *Wojna futbolowa* (*The Soccer War*) (1978)—employed this self-reflexivity alongside an aesthetic of magical realism that reflected the influence of both the interwar Polish avant-garde and the Latin American marvelous of Alejo Carpentier and Gabriel García Márquez. I argue that the marvelous real in Kapuściński's reportage expressed Eastern Europe's and Latin America's shared experiences of uneven and combined development and political-economic irrationality, even as his writing from this period sought to hold up Latin American socialism as a more authentic and democratic model for the Socialist Bloc.

Finally, in Chapter Five: Anti-colonial Reportage on the World Literary Market, I trace the shifting reception of Eastern European writers by the West in the last decades of

the twentieth century as both sides of the former Iron Curtain struggled to come to terms with the meaning of the Cold War and the place of the Third World in its aftermath. I show how Kapuściński's emergence on the global literary stage in the 1980s—thanks to the English translation of select works—fashioned him into a dissident figure and eclipsed the left anti-colonial valence of his writing. I first examine the English-language publication of Eastern European literature in book series and in the pages of the journal *Granta* in terms of what Pascale Casanova has described as the complex process of *littérisation* that accompanies the translation of literature from a minor language into a language of the literarily dominant center. I then explore the ways the *littérisation* of Kapuściński's work coincided with an "orientalist turn" in his writing that was critiqued and publically denounced by writers like Binyavanga Wainaina and Aleksandar Hemon. The fact that this turn began in the late 1970s, with *Cesarz* (*The Emperor*) (1978), and continued in the postsocialist period, in *Heban* (*Shadow of the Sun*) (1998), suggests that the problematic portrayal of African peoples in these late works is attributable in no small part to the disintegration of the geopolitical context of Socialist Internationalism, which had previously made representations of a dignified and agential Third World "other" politically necessary.

In the conclusion I consider how the current conflict in Crimea between Russia and Ukrainian separatists evinces the ongoing relevance of the application of postcolonial theory to the postsocialist world. I also reflect on the Polish government's recent hard right turn in response to the perceived threat of Middle Eastern and African refugees flooding the nation, in order to underscore the political significance of being able to point

to a time in the recent past when Poles understood themselves to be in political solidarity with Third World peoples. This history reminds us that racism and xenophobia are not essential qualities of Polish culture, or any culture for that matter—they are historically contingent responses to a new set of geopolitical configurations.

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In the wake of the triumph of neoliberalism and the disintegration of the Socialist Bloc, the brutal and tragic history of "actually existing socialism" has appeared to have very little to recommend it. For the past several decades, much as postcolonial theorists have privileged literary modernism and postmodernism and distanced themselves from mid-century anti-colonial nationalisms, Marxian sovietologists have tended to focus on the interwar Soviet avant-garde as a site for the recovery of the socialist project's aesthetic and political potentialities. But it is my contention that when we approach the history of the Second and Third Worlds in terms of the anti-imperialist ideas and practices that engendered a vast and diverse body of literary and cinematic work of the period (of which Kapuściński's reportage is but one example), the Cold War era proves equally worthy of cultural and political excavation. It's time to go digging in the ruins of global socialism.

Chapter One

In the Waiting Room of History: (Re)constructing Socialism in the Global '50s

> This does not mean that Poles prefer the United States. I believe—from what I've been able to gather from conversations with them—they are as much anti-American as they are anti-Soviet. Many of them, when asked what they want, tell me: Socialism.
>
> – Gabriel García Márquez, 1957[1]

In June 1955, Ryszard Kapuściński waited with a crowd of reporters for Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to arrive at Warsaw's Okęcie Airport. Nehru's visit to Poland, a brief stopover following a two-week visit to the Soviet Union, was greeted with much fanfare in the Polish capital. India's emergence in the post-war period as an independent nation after a protracted struggle against British colonial rule had made it a guiding light for the decolonizing world. Nehru's tour was an occasion for signing trade agreements and nonaggression pacts with Poland, and thereby demonstrating on the world stage the spirit of friendship and cooperation between the Third World and the Socialist Bloc that was being formalized in the post-war period.[2]

Kapuściński covered the visit for *Sztandar Młodych* (*Youth Banner*), the Stalinist-era newspaper of the Union of Polish Youth (Związek Młodzieży Polskiej, or ZMP). In an article titled "Na lotnisku" ("At the Airport"), he portrays the Prime Minister as though he were an international celebrity.[3] "Everyone who went to the Okęcie airport

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[1] See García Márquez, *De viaje por los países socialistas. 90 días en la "Cortina de hierro*," 101-02. Translation mine.
[2] Nehru made a similar visit to the United States in 1961, underscoring his non-alignment in the Cold War.
[3] The article appeared on the first page of the June 24, 1955 issue of *Sztandar Młodych* tucked in between several feature articles on the political significance of the event and a photograph of Nehru greeted at the

in the early hours of the day shall be forgiven their impatience," he writes, for "[t]hey are waiting for Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's arrival in Poland. We know Prime Minister Nehru is a politician fighting for the important issues of humanity: for the peaceful coexistence of nations, for cooperation, for friendship."[4] Kapuściński goes on to describe the "friendly greeting" of the crowds that lined the streets to catch a glimpse of Nehru's motorcade: "Thus began Prime Minister Nehru's visit to Poland, a land that will be hospitable to him" ("Na lotnisku" 1).[5] A few months later in November 1955, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev returned Nehru's diplomatic gesture by visiting India. And from the autumn of 1956 through the spring of 1957, Kapuściński would travel to the subcontinent on his first assignment abroad.

Shy of three hundred words, "At the Airport" would not warrant much attention were it not for the fact that it provides evidence of a key biographical and geopolitical fact: Kapuściński did not begin his career as a writer of anti-colonial reportage by going to the Third World; the Third World came to him. Nehru's interest in Poland no doubt had much to do with the rapid industrialization and the massive post-war reconstruction efforts at the heart of the socialist country's six-year-plan. Poland's adherence to the Soviet model of the 1920s and 30s, now augmented with post-war technologies, made it an example for how an underdeveloped, war-ravaged country might transform itself into a modern industrial nation state with the technical and economic assistance of the USSR. Wary of entering into economic partnerships with the former colonial powers, many Third World leaders embraced the countries of the Socialist Bloc as trading partners and

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airport by Polish communist party officials.

[4] This, and all quotations from "At the Airport," are my own translations.

[5] In addition to the capital, Nehru's tour also included a visit to Poland's Silesia mining region.

sources of technical know-how regarding state-supported development projects. As Łukasz Stanek explains in his work on Second World-Third World relations, beginning in the mid-1950s:

> This model of state-centered, justice-oriented, and promising fast-growth modernization was attractive to many post-colonial governments, for whom the alliance of the United States with the former colonizers was one more argument in favor of the Soviet model. Architects, planners, and technicians from socialist countries contributed to this task by designing industrial facilities, collective farms, large infrastructural projects, but also programs of distribution of welfare among the "masses," including social housing, schools, and medical facilities. (300)

In February 1956, at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party the Soviet Union overturned the two-camp worldview that had prevailed since the latter days of the Third International, and formally embraced the "uncommitted states" of the decolonizing world as "zones of peace" (Prashad 46). As a result, the Soviet Union increased economic aid to postcolonial African and Asian nations.

Much of this support went towards development projects that sought to apply the Soviet model to postcolonial contexts, just as it had a decade earlier gone towards the rebuilding of Poland and other satellite states devastated by the war. In an essay published in *Granta* in 1989, Kapuściński points to the way Poland's post-war development mirrored developments in the decolonizing world. Writing of an encounter with a group of tribal elders in Ghana in the early 1960s he recalls explaining to them

that:

> There was a time when my country was a colony. I respect what you've suffered, but we too, have suffered horrible things. There were streetcars, restaurants, districts *nur fur Deutsche*. There were camps, war, executions. . . . But Nana we were free afterwards. We built cities and ran lights into villages. Those who couldn't read were taught how to read. ("Snow in Ghana" 232)

What is significant about this passage is not only that it attempts (correctly or otherwise) to draw Poland and Ghana together on the basis of their shared colonial experience, it also establishes Polish development—the building of cities and the running of lights into villages—on an historical timeline in which Polish postcolonial accomplishments are also socialist accomplishments.[6]

But the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party not only marked a new phase in the history of socialist support for the decolonizing world, it also ushered in a period of tumult, reform, and eventually repression within the Socialist Bloc itself. For the Twentieth Congress was also the meeting where Khrushchev famously delivered his "secret speech" denouncing Stalin's crimes, thereby initiating the movement of de-Stalinization know as the Thaw. In Poland and Hungary this movement took on anti-imperialist overtones as de-Stalinization became synonymous with de-Sovietization.[7] The

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[6] Kapuściński thus puts forward a concept of Polish postcoloniality that is very different from the one held by many contemporary scholars for whom Eastern European postcoloniality is typically understood in terms of postsocialism (since colonialism and "Soviet-imposed" socialism are treated as one and the same).

[7] This was not the case throughout the Socialist Bloc. De-Stalinization occurred at different times and at different rates in the Eastern European People's Republics, and was not in every context imbricated with anti-Soviet sentiment.

simultaneity of these two programmatic shifts at the Twentieth Congress—the critique of Stalin and the embrace of the non-aligned Third World—reflected the broader zeitgeist of the mid-1950s, in which the global spirit of anti-imperialism not only brought the Soviet Union closer to the internationalist values it had once espoused during the interwar period, but also brought it into contradiction with its own satellite states (even as these states recognized their own political and economic conditions as having much in common with those of the Third World).

For this reason, I begin this dissertation with an analysis of the role that literary and cinematic reportage played in representing and facilitating socialist development in the Polish People's Republic in the 1950s. Just as they had been in the Soviet Union during the interwar period, construction sites and modernization projects were a major source of literary and filmic content—in all genres, but especially in reportage—in Polish culture from the post-war period through the Thaw years. By examining the ways in which the genre was mobilized to address problems of uneven development within the Socialist Bloc itself at a time when the Soviet Union's presence in Poland was a matter of contestation, I show how reportage developed an alternative aesthetics of socialist realism concomitant with the alternative socialist politics resulting from de-Stalinization in the mid-1950s.

In doing so I establish a genealogy of Kapuściński's genre of choice as one that emerged out of debates around socialist realist aesthetics from the interwar period through the Thaw, rather than a socialist subversion of imperialist travel writing or a Polish version of New Journalism. As I shall demonstrate in subsequent chapters, when

socialist reportage went abroad and transformed itself into anti-colonial reportage it carried with it formal qualities that reflected the terms of these debates (the preoccupation with resisting reified life through literary form, and the place of the narrating subject vis-à-vis the social totality). Moreover, by thinking Bandung and the Thaw alongside each other, aspects of the spirit of both events are productively brought to the surface. The anti-imperialism of what we might call "the Global '50s," as we shall see, is not reducible to a politics of anti-socialism, but rather must be read as a gesture towards an emergent third-way socialism—a socialism based on the right to national self-determination.

Uneven Development within and without the Socialist Bloc

"We built cities and ran lights into villages. Those who couldn't read were taught how to read," Kapuściński tells Ghana's postcolonial elders, and when he is done telling of his country's miraculous "postcolonial" modernization he reports that the, "The *Nana* stood up and grasped my hand. The rest of the elders did the same. We had become friends" ("Snow in Ghana" 232). For those less committed to thinking through the politics of Second World-Third World solidarity, this anecdote represents little more than the progress-oriented teleological mode of Enlightenment thought that postcolonial theorists have critiqued over the past several decades for reinforcing an understanding of the world's peoples as existing in a hierarchy of civilizational development. In *Provincializing Europe*, for example, Dipesh Chakrabarty famously called attention to the insidiousness of this kind of teleological thought in his discussion of John Stuart Mills' argument against granting self-rule to non-Western peoples. In an oft-quoted

passage from the book, Chakrabarty writes:

> [Mill's argument] thus consigned Indians, Africans, and other "rude" nations to an imaginary waiting room of history. In doing so it converted history itself into a version of this waiting room. We were all headed for the same destination, Mill averred, but some people were to arrive earlier than others. That was what historicist consciousness was: a recommendation to the colonized to wait. (8)

From his account of the opportunistic "not yet" of nineteenth century imperialists' rhetoric against decolonization, Chakrabarty not only puts forward a critique of historicism for placing non-Western peoples in a "waiting room of history," he also, by extension, rejects modernity as a "measuring rod for social progress" (9). In so doing he refutes a concept of modernity as capitalist totality, and instead insists on privileging the particular (his Indian peasant case study) against a "Eurocentric" universal.

The history of Third and Second World socialist development projects provides a critical standpoint from which to reexamine this well-worn argument in postcolonial studies. For in Kapuściński's anecdote about his exchange with the tribal elders, when he encourages postcolonial Ghana to catch up to his own country, he is referring to a nation that has only recently become fully modernized. What is communicated in the encounter is not Ghana's "rudeness" and Poland's civilizational superiority, but an exchange of support between subjects much closer on the developmental continuum. Their proximity allows them to occupy a shared temporal plane. Rather than deny the non-west's coevalness—a rhetorical strategy that, as Johannes Fabian has argued, amounts to "a

persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) . . . in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse, thereby making communication impossible" (31)—Kapuściński's understanding of Ghana's and Poland's (very nearly) shared Time is the basis for communication and "friendship"—between individuals as well as nations.

When Kapuściński traveled to India on a similar political friendship mission from the fall of 1956 to the spring of 1957, he was as concerned with the problem of development and the government's response to the country's housing crisis in India as he was with these matters in his own country. In a work of a photomontage published in *Sztandar Młodych* during his tour, Kapuściński depicts scenes of uneven and combined development in the former city of Bombay. "European-style" housing blocks, he writes in a caption to one of his photographs, stand like "giants" alongside the "most primitive" ways of living ("najbardziej prymitywny środków") (*Sztandar*; January 26, 1957).

Figure 1.1: Detail of Kapuściński's India photomontage ("Fotoreportaż własny z Indii," *Sztandar*; January 26, 1957).

While Kapuściński's description of non-modern Indian living conditions as "primitive" is rooted in a Eurocentricity that undermines the force of his critique, the gaze of the Polish reporter should not be misrecognized for that of the British imperialist who thinks temporally in "terms of the primitive" as "a category, not an object of Western thought" (Fabian 17). While both gazes assume positions of superiority vis-à-vis non-Western peoples, their historical relationship to the development continuum is distinct. This matters for how we interpret Kapuściński's representation of unevenness in India, Ghana, and Poland. It also bears on how we understand Second and Third World encounters more broadly.

Such encounters demand, I believe, a very different concept of "the waiting room of history" from the one put forward by Chakrabarty. In *History: The Last Thing before the Last* (1969), Siegfried Kracauer first conceived of history as a waiting room—specifically "the waiting room of railway station" (150)—to propose a conceptual framework for understanding an historical period not as an a priori "meaningful spatial unit," but as "a meeting place for chance encounters" (150). Theorizing periodicity in this manner allows for the "inherently provisional character" of history to be drawn out, thereby making room for contingency without rejecting a concept of the universal (191). For as Kracauer explains, "Time not only conforms to the conventional image of a flow but must also be imagined as not being such a flow. We live in a cataract of time. And there are 'pockets' and voids amidst these temporal currents, vaguely reminiscent of interference phenomena" (199). As a waiting room, history is figured as neither

teleological nor as an "empty vessel," but as an "intermediary space."

In contrast to Chakrabarty's use of the phrase, Kracauer's conceptualization of the "waiting room of history" as an intermediary space provides us with a theoretical apparatus for understanding encounters between the satellite states and the Third World—be they in postcolonial Ghana or the arrival's gate of Warsaw's airport—as "interference phenomena" in the "cataract" of Cold War history. Chakrabarty's appropriation of the "waiting room of history" as imperialist ideology obscures the political potentiality of these encounters, in which the Second and Third World subject come into contact on the basis of the problem of underdevelopment. The project of "provincializing Europe" serves to universalize Europe by obscuring the reality of uneven development in its eastern periphery, and thus disavow the shared concerns that influenced national modernization projects in many parts of the Second and Third Worlds alike in the post-war period. Recognizing this shared Time need not mean harboring uncritical nostalgia for the Soviet model—for it is perhaps in the failure of socialist modernity that we are most able to catch glimmers of the utopian potentiality of that model. In the very moment that it emerged as the Socialist Bloc's major ideological and material export, the execution of the Soviet model within the bloc underwent a crisis of confidence for failing to live up to its promises.

Not all Third World visitors to Eastern Europe were impressed by the rate of development and standard of living they found there. In García Márquez's reportage account of his travels in Eastern Europe in 1957, *De viaje por los países socialistas: 90 días en la "Cortina de hierro"* (*Travels in the Socialist Countries: 90 Days Behind the*

"Iron Curtain"), he notes how much poorer Poland is than its East German neighbor. With his characteristic use of the marvelous real he describes the poverty of the Polish capital city:

> For some time to come the multitude of Warsaw will be preserved in my memory walking in single file dragging kitchen utensils, empty cans, and all kinds of metal pots that make an irritating and constant noise against the pavement. In Warsaw there are very few automobiles. When the old refurbished trams, hobbled by excess passengers, are not passing you, the wide, tree-lined Avenue Marszalkowska belongs entirely to pedestrians. But the dense, ragged multitude, which spends much of its time looking at the shop window displays, maintains the habit of walking on the sidewalk. The impression is that they walk in single file, because they do not spill over into the empty street. No whistles, no combustion engines or street hawkers. The only noise you hear is the pure murmur of the multitude: The constant noise of kitchen utensils, empty cans and all kinds of metal pots. (87)[8]

García Márquez's does not explain why the people of Warsaw carry pots and pans, but the image he conjures of the "ragged multitude" carrying their kitchen wares wherever they go would seem to suggests that these people do not have a home where they can leave these crucial items. The clatter of the pots and pan stands out due to the lack of modern street transportation, and it is made all the more tragic by the description of the impoverished hoards staring into the shop window displays.

[8] Translation mine

It must be remembered that García Márquez is describing Warsaw in 1957—more than a decade after the end of World War Two. By the mid-1950s the promises and failures of the application of the Soviet model were becoming a source of national debate. Just a few months following Kapuściński's article about Nehru's visit to Warsaw, *Sztandar Młodych* published a scathing piece of investigative reportage by the young journalist that called into question the socialist credibility of this model. Kapuściński's piece "To też jest prawda o Nowej Hucie" ("This too is true of Nowa Huta"), drew attention to the appalling living and working conditions in the PRL's flagship industrial project—the steel mill and model socialist city in southern Poland, known as Nowa Huta—and demanded that Party officials take responsibility for this flagrant deformation of socialist planning. Upon its publication, the editorial staff of *Sztandar Młodych* was immediately fired and Kapuściński went into hiding in Nowa Huta among the workers and Stalinist youth leaders he had come to know from his time working there as member of a youth brigade.

As a result, the Central Committee found itself in a politically awkward standoff with Nowa Huta's proletarian heroes who refused to turn over comrade Kapuściński unless they could be guaranteed that no harm would come to him. An investigation to determine the validity of the article's allegations against Huta ensued, and in a political about-face, the commissars confirmed its findings. As a result, not only did Kapuściński's persecution cease, but he was soon after awarded the Gold Cross of Merit, Poland's highest civilian award for service to the country.[9]

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[9] For a more detailed account of the events following the publication of "This Too Is True of Nowa Huta," see Domosławski 73-93.

From the perspective of the tumultuous events that soon followed—Khrushchev's denouncement of Stalin in his February 1956 "secret speech", the death of Stalinist Polish leader Bołesław Bierut shortly thereafter, and the reinstatement of the "rehabilitated" political reformer Władysław Gomułka as First Secretary of the Polish Communist Party—it is possible to see the scandal around Kapuściński's Nowa Huta article and its quick resolution as an early sign of the official culture of reform that would come to characterize the Thaw years. In October 1956 the Soviet Union threatened to invade Poland after Gomułka removed from the Polish Politburo a Soviet marshal who had ordered troops to fire upon a workers' demonstration in the city of Poznań in June of that year. A mass mobilization in support of Gomułka's reforms and against Soviet intervention brought people to the streets of Warsaw and Poland's other major cities. At the eleventh hour, Khrushchev called off the Soviet invasion and conceded nominally to demands for a Polish road to socialism.[10] The following month a popular uprising in Hungary, inspired by the one in Poland, met a more brutal end.[11]

Although widely associated with the events of 1956, the use of the word "Thaw" to refer to reforms and reversals of Soviet policy was first used several years earlier by Ilya Ehrenburg in his novel by the same name, which was published in the magazine *Novy Mir* less than a year after Stalin's 1953 death. As winter turns to spring, the narrative of the *The Thaw* traces the personal development of archetypical socialist realist characters in an archetypical socialist realist setting: the intelligent wife of a factory boss

[10] Arguably the most significant reform resulting from the Polish Thaw was the end to the collectivization of the countryside.

[11] Nevertheless, throughout the second half of the 1950s, a revisionist (or reformist) orientation towards the socialist project became mainstream in the Polish People's Republic. For more on Polish revisionism, see David Ost's *Solidarity and the Politics of Anti-Politics: Opposition and Reform in Poland since 1968*.

leaves her despotic party-hack husband for a more emotionally authentic life with the *new* new man socialism—a romantic, Marxist humanist factory engineer. *The Thaw* therefore follows what Katerina Clark has identified as the "master plot" at the heart of the socialist realist novel. As Clark explains:

> The one invariant feature of all Soviet novels is that they are ritualized, that is, they repeat the master plot, which is itself a codification of major cultural categories …. [The master plot] shapes the novel as a sort of parable for the working-out of Marxist-Leninism in history. The novel takes as its focus a relatively modest figure, usually a Soviet worker, administrator, or soldier. This subject is known as the "positive hero." However modest he may be, the phases of his life symbolically recapitulate the stages of historical progress as described in Marxist-Leninist theory. The novel's climax ritually reenacts the climax of history in communism. (*The Soviet Novel*, 9-10)

Like other works of socialist realism, *The Thaw* "symbolically recapitulated" Marxist-Leninism—the development of the characters represented the next stage of communism as it emerged from Stalinist deformation. That this new socialist ethos would materialize against the backdrop of a socialist construction site was all the more powerful given the fact that building projects and those working on them had been a major theme of Stalinist-era socialist realist literature.[12] But as Clark reminds us, "Continuity in the use of symbols need not be an accurate index of continuity of values….in the Soviet novel many of the formulaic tropes have, over time, changed, or at least been modified in their

[12] See for example socialist realist "production novels" such as Fydor Vasilievich Gladkov's *Cement* and Valentin Kataev's *Time, Forward!*

meanings" (*The Soviet Novel*, 11).

Although the first recognizable literary work of de-Stalinization was a novel, for many Thaw-era reformers the reportage form (in both film and print media) proved uniquely appropriate to the self-reflexive, and even revolutionary, task of representing, critiquing and, importantly, redeeming the socialist project.[13] In his famous October '56 speech before a Warsaw crowd of more than half a million, Gomułka conceded that official socialist "words did not find a reflection in the actual reality" of post-war Poland ("Wielki Wiec"). Therefore, not only must that reality be transformed to reflect the political language, but words (and images) had to be mobilized to reveal where and how exactly reality had deviated from the socialist path. Many years later Marek Garztecki, a Polish journalist and diplomat (and later representative for Solidarity in London), reflected on the changing significance of the reportage form during de-Stalinization:

> reportage was considered the most elevated form of journalism in Poland, . . . [b]ut its function almost reversed over time. In the 1950s, it was a very important tool of Stalinist propaganda. Young journalists were sent "to the country" to write "stories from life" about how wonderful collectivization was, and how dramatically life had improved for the poor under communism. . . . [Around 1955] reportage, often written by the same journalists who had gushed about the benefits of communism a few years earlier, became a subtle tool for criticizing the system. (qtd. in Greenberg 125)

[13] It should be noted that the socialist realist novel and journalism were porous forms, particularly since many socialist realist novels were extremely topical, describing contemporary Soviet achievements of construction and development. For more on this see Clark, *The Soviet Novel*.

"This Too Is True of Nowa Huta" is thus best understood as part of a much broader movement of reportage literature and film in this period, a period referred to by Kapuściński several decades later as the "age of investigative journalism" (Buford 1987). And this investigative journalism arguably produced the Thaw, as much as the politics of the Thaw created the conditions of possibility for its emergence. [14]

Reportage: Between Socialist Realist and Avant-Garde Aesthetics

But "This Too is True of Nowa Huta" is not just a work of journalism, it is also a literary work that is stylistically notable for its use of shifting points of view, poetic refrains, and its *flâneur*-like accounts of wanderings amongst socialist realist housing blocks.[15] Far from being an inverted pyramid-style article, the piece is organized into six numbered sections of varying length containing scenes encountered by the narrator in the course of the visit to Huta, which are arranged in non-linear, often disorienting, juxtaposition. In this way, "This Too is True of Nowa Huta" anticipates the Thaw on a formal level as much as a political one. The years following 1956 saw the official end of the aesthetic program of socialist realism (as it had been laid out by the 1934 Soviet Writer's Congress and adopted as PRL doctrine in 1947) and the emergence of what might be described as a Thaw-era avant-garde period in Polish literature and cinema, of which reportage as both a literary genre and a cross-media aesthetic form was a prominent feature.[16]

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[14] Here I follow Evgeny Dobrenko who has argued that socialist realism did not function simply as propaganda for socialist politics, but rather, it *produced* socialism—it elevated socialism to reality (rather than simply ideology) by giving it form. For more on this see Dobrenko's *The Political Economy of Socialist Realism*.

[15] The figure of the flâneur would become a recurring motif in Thaw-era cinema. See for example Andrej Munk's *Spacerek staromiejski* (*A Walk in the Old City*) (1958)

[16] For more on the place of documentary aesthetics in the Thaw-era neo-avant-garde see Mikołaj Jazdon's

This neo-avant-garde turn in journalism is exemplified by a 1958 advertisement for *Sztandar Młodych* produced by the state-run Documentary Film Studio (Wytwórnia Filmów Dokumentalnych, or WFD)[17] and directed by Walerian Borowczyk in collaboration with the graphic designer and animator, Jan Lenica. The two-minute, blue-tinted film is an exhilarating montage of clips from archival news footage, abstract animation techniques, and Constructivist-style inter-titles, presented in rapid-fire succession over an improvisational jazz soundtrack. It begins with an extreme close-up of a human eye blinking directly into the camera, calling to mind Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera*. Images of dynamism follow—car races and crashes, bicycle races, boxing matches and airplanes, then images of political leaders, war-time footage of marching soldiers, and shots of bombed-out cityscapes. Then a rocket launch, jazz performances, fashion models, and close-ups of works of modern art by Pablo Picasso, Paul Klee and Henry Moore. As the sequences (roughly separated thematically into sports, politics and culture) gain speed and the music increases in tempo, the frames are interspersed with abstract animation (painting on celluloid) and the recurring image of the close-up of the eye, underscoring the Thaw-era preoccupation with "seeing the truth."

In order to understand the significance of neo-avant-gardism for a publication like *Sztandar Młodych*, both leading up to and following the events of 1956, such Thaw aesthetic practices must be understood not simply as a rupture with Stalinism, but as an

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"The Search for a 'A More Spacious Form': Experimental; Trends in Polish Documentary (1945-1989)" in *The Struggle for Form: Perspectives on Polish Avant-Garde Film, 1916-1989*, eds. Kamila Kuc and Michael O'Pray.

Other features of Thaw aesthetics included the appropriation of jazz and the hybridization of western fashions, as in the case Poland's *bikiniarze* youth movement). For more on this movement see Katherine Lebow's *Unfinished Utopia: Nowa Huta, Stalinism, and Polish Society, 1949–56.*

[17] Later renamed the Documentary and Feature Film Studio (*Wytwórnia Filmów Dokumentalnych i Fabularnych*).

expression of continuity with interwar Soviet avant-garde aesthetics. At a time when the project of building socialism was simultaneously challenged and reinvigorated by de-Stalinization, avant-garde forms of realism were recuperated in both art and politics.

In 1927 several Soviet avant-garde artists who had formerly been associated with the revolutionary arts organization *Lef* reconstituted themselves as *Novyi Lef* in an effort to establish "factography" as the literary wing of Constructivism. On the cusp of the USSR's first five-year-plan, artists struggled to develop methods for shaping the revolutionary consciousness of Soviet subjects that seemed to lag behind, or even threaten to turn away from, the new political reality of the socialist society. Combatting what was by most accounts residual reified consciousness required developing aesthetic forms and practices that could play a pedagogical role for the masses. Unlike the rival arts organization, the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (RAPP), which endorsed the socialist realist novel as a means of portraying (and thus fostering) revolutionary consciousness, Sergei Tret'iakov and other *Novyi Lef* artists believed that at the very level of form the novel, that bourgeois literary form par excellence, was at best archaic and at worse reactionary. In opposition to the novel, *Novyi Lef* proposed "factography," or the "literature of fact."[18]

If the task of the writer was to engage readers in the reality of social transformation Treti'akov argued that, "the memoir, travel notes, the sketch, articles, *feuilletons*, reportage, investigations, documentary montage—opposed to the belletristic forms of novels, novellas and short stories," were the literary forms best equipped to

[18] For a discussion of the rival positions held by RAPP and *Novyi Lef* on the matter of the novel, see Gough.

carry out this revolutionary task ("What's New" 270). Through his commitment to these hybrid nonfiction genres Tret'iakov became a model for the "operative writer" championed by Walter Benjamin in "The Author as Producer," who was to be distinguished from the journalist insofar as his "mission [was] not to report, but to struggle; not to play the spectator but to intervene actively," and in doing so, to transform the apparatus of literary production (Benjamin 257).

In the dynamic history of early Soviet aesthetics, the nonfiction genres of the factography movement ultimately proved less influential than the *bildungsroman* of the revolutionary hero. RAPP prevailed over *Novyi Lef*—the formalization of the doctrine of socialist realism at the 1934 First Congress of Soviet Writers meant the beginning of the end for factography as a formal challenge to the novel. Under Stalinism, factography gave way to the aesthetics of realism that tended more often to present "everyday life in its stagnation and dependence on a stereotyped system of things,"—as Tret'iakov had once characterized bourgeois literature—rather than "reality sensed dialectically, in a process of continuous formation" ("From Where to Where" 213).[19] But despite the place of privilege given to the socialist realist novel, socialist reportage did not come to an end. What did come to an end, arguably, was its deployment as an aesthetic tool in the fight against reified consciousness. As Soviet socialism deformed into rule by a bureaucratic party-state, reification and alienation emerged anew—not simply as the persistence of residual capitalist social forms, but as a result of certain contradictions in the new social system. The fetishization of labor by the socialist state reproduced social alienation by

[19] Like many Soviet avant-garde artists and intellectuals, by the end of the interwar period Tret'iakov fell out of favor with the Party, and in 1937 fell victim to Stalin's purges.

reducing the value of human life to its value as objectified labor, and the ideological celebration of labor by the state only served to mystify this alienation. Governed both by bureaucratic reason (in the Weberian sense) and, somewhat antithetically, a system of *nomenklatura* that meted out privileges based on social connections and favors, the state increasingly came to stand apart from social reality. [20] As Stalin consolidated the revolution, the reportage genre was mobilized to produce mythologizing narratives of a state that, paradoxically, was supposed to be moving steadily in the direction of a worker's paradise while at the same time having already arrived at it.[21]

This contradictory temporality was at the heart of what Lukács identified as the two major shortcomings of Stalinist-era aesthetics: Revolutionary Romanticism and Illustration (*The Meaning* 119).[22] With regard to the former tendency, the portrayal of a fully formed, fully functional socialist reality in socialist realist works meant that "events which were still exceptional at that stage of socialism, were presented as typical" and were used to represent what was in fact, "the erroneous dogma of the immanence of communism" (120). On the other side of the problem of socialist realist aesthetics was

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[20] As Yugoslav Marxist humanist and Praxis member Zagorka Golubović has argued, under Soviet-style socialism both labor and the state are re-fetishized. For a good discussion of Golubović's work, see Schweitzer 43; for more on state fetishism, see Taussig.

[21] The end of the Soviet avant-garde, and of avant-garde reportage practices, was perhaps not a result of its repression, but of its sublation by Stalinism. As Boris Groys argues, avant-garde aesthetics and the doctrine of socialist realism were not necessarily antithetical. Socialist realism, according to Groys was formulated by "elites who had assimilated the experience of the avant-garde and been brought to socialist realism by the internal logic of the avant-garde method itself" (*The Total Art of Stalinism* 9). Groys notes, "the relative proximity of the positions" in debates on socialist aesthetics at the time and argues that, "This similarity between the views of the victors and their victims obliges us to regard with particular caution any unambiguous opposition between them arising from a purely moral interpretation of events." (9). Following from this, Groys posits that, "Under Stalin the dream of the avant-garde was in fact fulfilled and the life of society was organized in monolithic artistic forms" (9).

[22] More generally Lukács argued that in Stalinist aesthetics the relation between "research, propaganda and agitation" were reversed, "Instead of basing propaganda on research, thus forging propaganda into a powerful instrument of agitation, agitation became the point of departure, the guiding principle of propaganda and research" (*The Meaning* 119).

what Lukács calls the aesthetics of "Illustration," in which literature "ceased to reflect the dynamic contradictions of social life; it became an illustration of an abstract 'truth'" (119). Rather than representing/demonstrating the mutually-constitutive relationship between thought and material reality, by putting theory before the object Illustration simply (and inadequately) inverted the relation between the theory and practice. Furthermore, according to Lukács, "Even where this 'truth' was in fact true and not, as so often [under Stalinism], a lie or a half-truth, the notion of literature-as-illustration was extremely detrimental to good writing" (119). Because Romanticism and Illustration were endemic to Stalinist aesthetics, the actualization of the avant-garde's utopian aspirations for the total integration of art and life under Stalinism was as false as Soviet socialism's premature claim to immanence.

Notably, Lukács made these assessments of Stalinist aesthetics from Budapest in the summer of 1956, months shy of the Soviet invasion of Hungary. A decade into the socialist transformation of Eastern European the "erroneous dogma of the immanence of communism," Lukács argued, was particularly a problem in these newly socialist countries where socialism had arrived "fully-formed" following World War Two—the political and cultural contradictions having been "worked out" by the Soviet experience decades in advance (120). In all aspects of life—from the economic to the cultural—the task was to simply follow the Soviet model.

As a result, the political and economic transformations taking place in the Soviet Union's recently-acquired satellite states lacked the *dramatis personae* of proletarian revolution and thus required other kinds of "proof". Documentary films and literary

reportage provided evidence of the success of socialist building projects, cooperative farms and worker collaboration with the new system, and helped to map socialism's forward progression onto the landscapes of Eastern European nations.[23]

In the Polish context, so important was the film medium to building socialism, the facility that housed the Documentary Film Studio (WFD) was among the first to be constructed amidst the ruins of post-war Warsaw. The WFD began operating in 1949, producing socialist realist newsreel for Polska Kronika Filmowa (literarlly, Polish film chronicles)—including those by filmmaker Andrzej Munk.[24] Among these early newsreels, Munk's 1951 *Kierunek, Nowa Huta!* (*Destination, Nowa Huta!*) is a classic of Polish socialist realist cinematic reportage. Munk's 13-minute film begins not in Nowa Huta, but in an unnamed village on the outskirts of Krakow. For centuries, a narrator tells us, the peasantry had been forced to choose between seeking a better life abroad or enduring poverty, sickness and death on Polish soil. Reflecting to the past ways of life the narrator asks, "Was there time for joy then?" as the camera moves in for a close up of an elderly woman in traditional peasant dress.[25] Clearly not, the accompanying silence implies, as the woman gazes out at a field being plowed by draft horses. But as a bugle begins to blare triumphantly, the narrator declares, "Man shall have time for joy

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[23] This was in many ways a repetition of what documentary forms had already set out to accomplish in the Soviet Union in the interwar period. As Emma Widdis argues, cinema played a central role in "shaping the imaginary geography of the Soviet Union…. it represented the territory, of course, and, perhaps even more importantly, offered new ways of looking at it" (*Visions of a New Land*, 120).

[24] Best known for his 1956 film *Człowiek na torze* (*Man on the Tracks*), after the end of Stalinism Munk would go on to become a major figure in the Polish film movement that emerged from the Thaw and marked a return to avant-garde aesthetics.

[25] In certain places, such as this, I have found the English subtitles to the film to be lacking and have opted to provide my own translations.

ahead!"[26] The next shot, however, is not yet Nowa Huta, but the medieval city of Krakow, the historic capital of the Polish church and monarchy, and the bugle tune is that of the traditional *hejnał* played from the spire of Saint Mary's Cathedral in the city's old town. In this way, the film moves progressively from the rural, agrarian-centered time and space of the pre-capitalist peasant economy to the urban time and space of the once aristocratic and then bourgeois city. But this is not the final stop. The destination is, after all, Nowa Huta—the time and space of socialism—and the "view from Krakow's towers seems vaster than ever" because, as the narrator reminds us, "thousands of people are building a new life beyond the old medieval wall of Krakow."

The bugle tune sounds once again and blends with that of another—a bugle wake up call for the builders of Huta. As the camera cuts with a left to right pan from the old town to a workers' camp at the construction site, young, healthy workers spring from their tents full of enthusiasm for the day's work of building "a bright, new tomorrow." The workers march down dirt paths to board trams, trains and buses in the direction of Nowa Huta—the direction of the socialist future. What follows is a montage of long, aerial and medium shots of the transportation of people and building materials. Out of the village, past the medieval city, past the ruins of an old fort of the Austro-Hungarian empire—"Destination, Nowa Huta!" the narrator announces several times with increasing volume and gusto.

[26] Translation is my own.

Figure 1.2: Workers make their way to the construction site. *Destination, Nowa Huta!*

Figure 1.3: The construction of socialism. *Destination, Nowa Huta!*

Once on the Nowa Huta construction site, the omniscient, third-person narration continues, guiding the tour of the building site over the course of a single day. And yet, the temporal dimensions of life in the district are portrayed not only in terms of the dawn to dusk workday, but also the mid to long-term development of the workers—individually and collectively. Like the building site of Nowa Huta, "People also undergo changes." They grow with the city; move up in skill and rank—from bricklayers to project directors. Young people arrive, uneducated and illiterate, and are schooled in construction techniques, reading, writing, and culture. The viewer is privy to these transformative lessons in the space of both the classroom and the work site. At the local nursery, the early years of childhood are compared with "Nowa Huta's first steps in the world"—the proletarian children are growing alongside the new town and the new political system. At the end of the workday, young men are shown to have time for leisure activities like their "favorite sport" or "favorite book by a Soviet writer," and for "a stroll around town." As evening falls we watch the lights of Huta twinkle off one by one as the workers turn in for the night. In the morning, the narrator announces, "the road out of Krakow comes alive again." The builders of socialism rise and make their way towards Nowa Huta. The film closes in much the same way it began, with images of cars, trains and buses racing down the road to the future, cheered on by the narrator's declarative and now almost imperative refrain, "Destination, Nowa Huta!"

Figure 1.4: Modern living conditions in Nowa Huta. *Destination, Nowa Huta!*

Kapuściński's account of life in Huta a couple of years later in "This Too is True of Nowa Huta" would contest Munk's socialist realist portrayal of the steel mill. But, in the spirit of the Polish Thaw that would soon follow, the objective of this contestation was not so much to discredit Nowa Huta altogether, as it was to expose where and how it had failed to live up to its ideals. As in Ehrenburg's *The Thaw*, in Kapuściński's account of Huta, the socialist building site functions as both an example of the "state fetishism" that has allowed reification to return to socialist society, and as an opportunity to overcome this reification through a form of Thaw-era praxis that takes individual development as seriously as industrial development. This would translate in aesthetic practice to reportage that foregrounded the role of the subject in both form and content.

This Too Is Socialist Realism

In his theorization of the political role of critical realism in capitalist society, Lukács makes the deceptively simple observation that socialist realism differs from critical realism insofar as it seeks "to describe the forces working towards socialism *from the inside*" (*The Meaning* 93). It is "able to portray from the inside human beings whose energies are devoted to the building of a different future, and whose psychological and moral make-up is determined by this" (96). It is precisely this inside portrayal that Kapuściński wishes to offer readers of "This Too Is True of Nowa Huta" by dwelling on the emotional and psychological pull of Nowa Huta (and by extension, socialism) for the people who are actively working to build it. Therefore, instead of beginning with a description of Nowa Huta's shortcomings, the article opens with earnest admiration:

> So, you have arrived. You greet the city like a close friend whom you had to leave long ago. You walk down streets, which were not there before, between houses that are unknown to you. . . . But in the end the past is not so distant, that time when the first foundations were laid here and the first door of the first apartment opened. At that time, everything here was a first, the people too. Today you can still meet them. Many of them left, but it is easy to find familiar friends. They have a home, a job, a family, and they arrived empty handed, with nothing. . . . They are everywhere here. In their lives you can read the history of Nowa Huta. (2)

The narrator ("you") is a friend of Huta, a friend of socialism. The truth about Huta the report wishes to reveal is not so much in place of the utopian one, but in addition to it

("This *too* is true . . .")—the utopian and the real exist here alongside each other, in productive tension. In this way the text signifies to its readers from the outset that it is grounded in a socialist perspective.

But while Kapuściński begins by acknowledging Nowa Huta's accomplishments, he quickly turns our attention to a darker side of the district:

> But inside this picture of Huta, in its interior, there are disturbing and bad things. . . . You look at them. You explore and investigate. Here questions accumulate without answers. There is growing outrage, objections are raised. You exclaim: Look carefully at Nowa Huta, Carefully! It will be an instructive lesson. Injustice, villainy, callousness, hypocrisy. People left to fend for themselves. Wounds left untreated. Such is the Huta you will see. (2)

Like the refrain, "Destination, Nowa Huta!" in Munk's film, here "Look carefully" is not so much the narrator's instruction to the reader, but the reader's rallying cry. Through the use of the second person the narrator invites reader participation in this "instructive lesson." Much as Benjamin believed that reportage could turn spectators into collaborators by formally breaking down the barrier between reader and writer, the singular pronoun "you" here hails the reader into the role of the journalist. Where others have looked away, you will look carefully. You will look in the direction of Nowa Huta's social failures, and you will take responsibility for them. In this way the distance between reader and writer is collapsed, throwing the reader into the space of Nowa Huta and into direct contact with the workers who struggle there.

The cryptic imperative of the opening of "This Too Is True of Nowa Huta" also functions as an intertextual reference to a widely circulated, and at the time, scandalous work of poetry by Adam Ważyk titled "Poemat dla dorosłych" ("Poem for Adults"), which was published in the literary magazine *Nowa Kultura* in August 1955—one month prior to the publication of Kapuściński's article. In what amounted to the strongest critique of the Polish socialist government to date, Ważyk's poem juxtaposed the official Nowa Huta success-story with the hardship of everyday life there—which he characterized as "fed on the emptiness of big words." "Poem for Adults" warns: "WATCH OUT! (UWAGA!) . . . Do not go, my boy, to Nowa Huta, / for you will be poisoned on the way." In stanza four Ważyk paints a bleak picture of Huta:

> From villages and towns, they come by the wagonload
> to build a steel mill, conjure up a city,
> dig from the earth a new Eldorado,
> An army of pioneers, an assembly of rabble,
> they crowd into shacks, barracks, and hotels,
> they whistle as they trudge down the muddy streets:
> a great migration, disheveled ambition
> [….]
> yearning for vodka and whores,
> mistrustful souls, torn from the bottom,
> half aroused and half deranged,
> hesitant with words, singing folk songs,

ejected suddenly from the darkness of the middle ages,

the wandering mass, inhuman Poland,

howling with boredom on long December nights.[27]

By mimicking the tone and even key phrases of the poem, and then, as we shall see, diligently taking up many of the issues raised by it (including the overcrowding of workers' barracks, the abrupt loss of traditional culture, and staggering boredom of life in Huta that leads to alcohol abuse and sexual promiscuity) Kapuściński's article attempts to recuperate the content of Ważyk's critique and proletarianize its concerns in form.[28] For towards the end of "This Too Is True of Nowa Huta," Kapuściński's concedes to Ważyk's points of criticism but rejects the terms of his argument: "Those who dwell in Nowa Huta are not legendary heroes, they are ordinary, real people. Many a times they have gone down crooked paths, but they are not 'rabble,' 'half-deranged souls,' 'the inhumanity of Poland.'" Kapuściński allows workers to publically respond to Ważyk by reporting on their reactions to the poem at a Nowa Huta workers' meeting:

> "To us it is an outrage. We are not like in the poem. We are real people." "Poem for Adults" did not resonate with them. . . . The stanzas of this poem did not sound to them like a call to struggle. It deepened bitterness. But they admitted to the reality of much of the poem's imagery, and all the more explicitly that too rarely do they read the whole truth about it. (2)

"This Too Is True of Nowa Huta," is thus as much a response to Ważyk's

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[27] Translation mine. All quotes from Adam Ważyk's "Poemat dla dorosłych" are translated from the original found at: http://lewicowo.pl/poemat-dla-doroslych

[28] For more on the contradictions of Nowa Huta and contemporary debates around it, see Lebow, *Unfinished Utopia: Nowa Huta, Stalinism, and Polish Society, 1949–56.*

representation of Nowa Huta as it is to official socialist realist ones. Kapuściński's account of life in Huta, like Ważyk's, seeks to challenge the state's representation of the steel mill as one free of social contradiction. Like "Poem for Adults," "This Too Is True of Nowa Huta" seeks to document the impossibility of the living and working conditions in Nowa Huta in order to stir public outrage. But in opposition to "Poem for Adults," the goal of Kapuściński's reportage is to overcome these contradictions from within socialism through a politics of solidarity, and to do so with a popular literary genre—reportage—that would "resonate" with working people as a "call to struggle." As Kapuściński instructs his reader-journalists: "In Nowa Huta they must see everyday that we come to the defense of working people" (2).[29]

Kapuściński's critique of Huta is directed not at the working day, as such, but rather at with what takes place around it. It is a critique of everyday life, where the everyday is understood in the Lefebvrian sense as the simultaneity of "illusion and truth, power and helplessness; the intersection of the sector man controls and the sector he does not control" (Lefebvre 40). Thus, Kapuściński writes:

> Let's observe the life of a young man here in Huta. He gets up in the morning and goes to work. Returns at 3 o'clock. That's all. 3 o'clock is the end of the [work] day. I walk around these [workers'] hotels. I look in the rooms: they're just sitting there. In fact, this is the only activity they're able to do: sit. They're not even talking. What's there to talk about? They could read—but they're not in the habit of doing so. They could sing—it

[29] Arguably, Kapuściński's effort to assert his own work is even more radical, and authentically socialist, than Ważyk's amounts to a splitting of hairs, for Ważyk also understood "Poem for Adults" to be an expression of his commitment to carrying out the socialist program, rather than a total critique of it.

> would bother the others, could start a fight. They don't want that. They just sit. When night comes they wander around aimlessly in the streets. (2)

He goes on to observe that there is no pool or playing field. The common rooms are empty and the two small movie theaters lack the capacity to seat more than a fraction of the residents. There is no shortage of bars, but the workers do not have enough money to patronize them. In sum, the atmosphere of Huta is one of debilitating dullness. And it is this boredom that leads young people down the road of moral depravity. Young married couples living apart in gender-segregated barracks meet by night in the ditches of construction sites. Young girls infect their multiple partners with venereal diseases. Mothers prostitute their daughters from inside their Nowa Huta apartments. The sexual exploits of a 14-year-old girl interviewed by Kapuściński's "[make] you feel like vomiting" (2).

What is perhaps most striking about Kapuściński's characterization of Huta in these terms is that his attack on its living conditions is not directed at the socialist state's desire to mold the youth of Nowa Huta into intelligent, productive and cultured subjects, but rather on it failure to do so successfully. "They came from the villages, they brought their religious morality, which no longer has any use here," Kapuściński writes. "But we didn't give them an education, didn't impart strict collective views on these vibrant traditional people. How can we have the audacity to turn our backs on these people, or to overlook all of it?" Socialism, it seems, has not penetrated Polish culture deeply enough. The new man of socialism has not been given the opportunity to live up to his potential. In short, the youth of Huta have been abandoned and betrayed.

The mismanagement of funds and insufficient planning on the part of Party bureaucrats leads the narrator to ask several times throughout the article "Who is responsible?" acknowledging that, "Well-known people whose fault it is shirk the guilt." The workers of Huta, he reports, are daily betrayed by the socialist state, but Kapuściński's effort to expose the social contradictions of Poland's six-year plan is inseparable from his political commitment to work through and overcome these contradictions in the direction of true socialism, from a place of solidarity with the working class. The closing paragraph of the article is nothing if not a call to action:

> In Nowa Huta people wait for justice. They cannot wait much longer. It is necessary to go there, to uncover what has been carefully buried out of sight, and respond to the many bitter questions. . . . We will return to this struggle. We will write about it. Write about it (that is, participate in it) to a greater extent and more fully than we have thus far. (2)

With these lines "This Too Is True of Nowa Huta" comes to a close. The "you" at the beginning of the piece has been organized into a collective "we" through the production and reception of the article. The "you" of the reader who has borne witness to the reality of Huta now joins the author-narrator in solidarity with the people who struggle there. This "we: is therefore not a general "we", but "we" the socialist reformers who will call bureaucratic socialism's bluff.

Thaw Praxis and Cinematic Reportage

Kapuściński was, to be certain, not alone in his fight against the deformations of Polish

socialism; nor was he alone in turning to reportage as an aesthetic weapon in that struggle. In the mid-1950s young filmmakers trained at the Łódź Film School in east-central Poland and All-Union State Film School in Moscow began experimenting with making short, newsreel-style films that examined under-acknowledged social problems. These films would come to be known as the Polish "Black Series" ("Czarna seria"). Between 1954 and 1958, sixteen short films were produced that shared a common interest in representing a darker version of Polish reality than had been advertised by the socialist realist documentaries of the immediate post-war period. These films drew heavily from the aesthetics of Italian neorealism. Officially derided by the Stalinist authorities, Italian neorealism had been studied in closed screenings at the Łódź Film School and was readily embraced by young Polish filmmakers who in the mid-1950s would come to see in it a "chance to break with predecessors and reflect the spirit of the de-Stalinization period" while maintaining a commitment to a realist aesthetic that would expose the "falsified reality" of Stalinism (Haltof, *Polish National Cinema* 79).

Black Series films took on unsavory yet quotidian subject matter—violent hooliganism, the crippling boredom of urban youth, the on-going superstitious backwardness of isolated peasant villages, bureaucratic corruption and mismanagement of socialist projects. It must be stressed, however, that Black Series films were not dissident films. Although critical of contemporary social conditions, these films were mostly government-sanctioned and frequently screened at theaters before feature films. Many functioned in the spirit of public service announcements, and were intended to galvanize audiences to reform the socialist system, rather than reject it outright.

Despite their adoption of certain aspects of neorealist aesthetics, Black Series films did not altogether constitute a departure from the conventions of documentary filmmaking established during the Stalinist period. As Karolina Kosinska has noted, insofar as they sought to expose contemporary social problems, these films represent a break with the earlier period of socialist realist documentary cinema that erased social discord from the screen. But, according to Kosinska, their reliance on the heavy-handed manipulation of reality brought them closer to socialist realist cinema than they would have cared to admit. Although she concedes that "documentary film is always staged," (because recording pure reality is impossible and staging "the reality in front of the camera, is a characteristic of the documentary mode itself") in the Black Series, "staging is not just a method helping to lend a dramatic structure to the documentary story and to make it as effective as a fictional one, it is rather a tool of manipulation . . . and it is an immanent characteristic of socialist realism" (203-04). Indeed, by imposing narrative frameworks (and thus "manipulating" reality, as Kosinska would have it) Black Series films were propaganda films intended to draw attention to social ills and empower the spectator to take an active interest in their resolution.

Among the sixteen Black Series films made in the late 1950s was Maksymilian Wrocławski's *Miejsce zamieszkania* (*Place of Residence*) (1957), a reportage account of the dismal conditions of Nowa Huta. Like Kapuściński's article, Wrocławski's film provides a critical rejoinder to earlier celebratory documentaries about the steel mill and is concerned not with the workday but with what happens in the time and space

surrounding it.[30] It is, after all, not the place of work that is of interest to Wrocławski, but the place of *residence.* The film opens with a trio of workers ironically whistling Nowa Huta's popular theme song as they shuffle down a muddy path to the barracks, presumably coming from a long day of work building the steel mill (like most black series films, *Place of Residence* is shot on location but relies of the use of actors and staged scenarios to represent the "reality" of the situation). Back at the camp, workers crowd a kiosk serving beer. Drink orders are shouted over the background noise of a loudspeaker, which rattles off, in a robotic monotone, building statistics that demonstrate Huta's success. While the announcement boasts of the modern apartments now available to the young workers, the camera records a scene of workers squatting in the mud, heating pots of stew over open fires and instigating drunken brawls. The loudspeaker announcement gives way to a dissonant melody, a soundtrack the film will use repeatedly to signal (to paraphrase Gomułka) that official words do not reflect reality. A narrative voice-over explains, "These are the ones who built the furnaces and steelworks of Nowa Huta. And this is how they lived in the nearby Pleszów estate still in 1954." A worker hunching over a fire gazes in the direction of Huta's smokestacks, which fill the horizon as powerful symbols of the industrial socialist future. The *mise-en-scène* here captures the disenchantment with the linear progression of socialism, for the worker's present

[30] While the precise nature of Kapuściński's relationship to the production of this documentary about the bleak living standards of the district is unknown, it would not be entirely unfounded to consider *Place of Residence* to be a cinematic adaptation of "This Too Is True of Nowa Huta." Kapuściński was, without a doubt, connected to the Black Series milieu. He is known to have written a voice-over script for Kazimierz Karabasz's Black Series film about urban youth*, Ludzie z pustego obszaru* (*People from the Empty Zone*) (1957)—although in the end Karabasz decided not to use it (Email correspondence with Karabasz, April 27, 2013). Given this association, it is possible that Wrocławski would have consulted Kapuściński's Nowa Huta literary reportage while producing his filmic one.

wretchedness is temporally (and nearly spatially) coextensive with that future. The scene is thus one of "uneven and combined" socialist development.

Figure 1.5: From the primitive worker's barracks at Pleszów, with Nowa Huta rising in the distance. *Place of Residence*.

The film cuts to the door of an administrator's office, and the narrator informs us that "there were people responsible for these matters." In the staged sequence that follows, an actor portraying a local administrator welcomes a reporter (also an actor) into his office. Both are denied a concrete identity—the reporter is shot from behind, while the administrator's head remains outside the frame. By obscuring the faces of both the bureaucrat and reporter, the film portrays them as social types rather than as specific characters.[31] What's more, the reporter is filmed not directly from behind but rather at a

[31] However, given that the film is said to portray a scene that occurred several years ago, around the time of scandal surrounding Kapuściński's Nowa Huta article, the figure of the journalist here is perhaps intended to stand in for Kapuściński. Evidence to the latter is suggested by the details of the fictional reporter's

diagonal over the his left shoulder, creating a point of view shot that collapses the viewer's gaze with that of the reporter. When the administrator reaches across his desk to light the reporter's cigarette, his hand stretches out towards at the camera, as if to light a cigarette between the viewer's lips. The viewer-reporter is then taken on an official tour of Nowa Huta's finest rooms, baths and social clubs. Through this formal mechanism, the viewer has become the reporter—has become a *collaborator*—in much the same way that in "This Too Is True of Nowa Huta" Kapuściński used the literary technique of second person narration to merge the investigative narrator with the reader.

Figure 1.6: The *mise-en-scène* collapses the spectator and the investigative reporter. *Place of Residence*

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interests—he introduces himself as being "here about the apartments, the [worker] hotels, also about those marital issues," all issues on which Kapuściński reported.

So far in *Place of Residence* the viewer-reporter is the bureaucrat's collaborator, but he will soon see what is really taking place behind the model apartments and official rhetoric. As evening falls, the dissonant soundtrack returns along with the film's narration, which informs us, "Not everyone was so lucky." The point of view is still presumably that of the reporter's but we will now be taken on a different kind of tour. Housing blocks are overcrowded and poorly planned. In dramatic chiaroscuro lighting, women are shown queuing for use of the only kitchen in their building: "One kitchen? For five stories? For around forty people?" The narrator's questions draw out the poor logic of Nowa Huta's planning. He likewise criticizes Huta's cultural venues and expresses disenchantment with socialist planning for having been "planned not according to the needs of the youth, but according to the so-called plan."[32] In the sequence that follows, a concert is overcrowded with drunken young men, who, having been turned away for lack of space, break and climb through windows rather than miss a chance to be entertained. But the narrator asks, "Were they really that bad, these young workers?" The camera moves in for humanizing close-up shots of individual workers asleep in their bunks and the narrator answers his own rhetorical question: "It seems they are not worse than other, ordinary boys their age." The camera then cuts to images of cramped, filthy sleeping arrangements—a slow montage of narrow halls, dirty floors and unsanitary bathrooms. "This is how 2,200 young workers lived here, the builders of Nowa Huta," the narrator explains, implying that the moral failures of Nowa Huta's inhabitants are the result of their impossible living conditions rather than any intrinsic flaw of the young working class.

[32] Translation of this sentence is my own, and is slightly different from that of the film's English subtitles.

As the film draws to a close, the narrator laments, "These times are not that distant. . . . Pleszów still exists and people live here like in the old times"—that is, under Stalinism. The film then concludes by looping the same footage with which it began—two workers walk down a muddy path to the barracks to order beer from a kiosk as building statistics blare over a loudspeaker. By repeating the opening footage at the end the viewer is left with the sense that nothing changes. The film's non-developmental narrative and structure thus registers growing disillusionment with Thaw-era reforms. The voice-over provides the final closing comments: "Pleszów continues. It still exists. . . . The boys of Pleszów have been waiting til today." These closing lines are strikingly similar to those of "This Too Is True of Nowa Huta" ("In Nowa Huta people wait for justice. They cannot wait much longer."), but rather than the expression of commitment to the reform of the socialist project found in Kapuściński's article, *Place of Residence* calls into doubt the likelihood of socialism's actualization. Progress, it seems, has not only been temporarily stalled, but is continuously and hopelessly impeded. The narration points directly to the false hope of the Thaw's reforms by acknowledging that although during the events of 1956, "People's cries made many an official resign. The files still store unresolved problems." The workers (and the viewers) continue to trudge down the same crooked road.

In Kapuściński's reportage, by contrast, the narrative does not conclude with socialist Poland consigned to this "waiting room of history" (in Chakrabarty's sense of the terms). When Kapuściński insists that "[justice] *must* come here. . . . [T]he struggle for a better life in Nowa Huta *will* continue. . . . We *will* return to this fight" [italics

mine], the general political orientation of the piece is shown to be not disenchantment, but hope. Much as in the opening lines of Ernst Bloch *Principle of Hope* ("What are we waiting for? What awaits us?" (1)) the space of waiting at the end of "This Too Is True of Nowa Huta" is imbued with what Bloch identifies as the revolutionary quality of hope: that it "goes out of itself, makes people broad instead of confining them. . . . The work of this emotion requires people who throw themselves actively into what is becoming, to which they themselves belong" (Bloch 3). That is, "to participate to a greater extent and more fully than we have thus far" ("This Too Is True" 2).

It is this principle of hope that sets Kapuściński's reportage apart from the "blackness" of *Place of Residence.* But it is worth pointing out that the two years separating Kapuściński's literary reportage from Wrocławski's film are significant ones in the history of Polish socialism. By the time *Place of Residence* was screened, Hungary had been invaded by the Soviet Union and, despite having accomplished certain economic and political reforms (including greater freedom for the press and an end to the collectivization of the Polish countryside), in the face of Soviet pressure, Gomułka weakened his resolve for a Polish road to socialism. By 1957 there were fewer reasons to feel optimistic.

Perhaps because the reforms of 1956 are largely understood to have been betrayed following Leonid Brezhnev's rise to power in 1964, the Thaw tends to be thought of as a premonition—the first series of crises and upheavals that would ultimately lead to the "inevitable" demise of actually existing socialism. This estimation, over-determined by the post-'89 triumph of capitalism, forecloses political assessment of

the Thaw's significance in its own time, on its own terms, as well as in an international context. What makes the Thaw culturally and politically significant, I contend, is not that it marks the beginning of the end of the socialist project, but that it represents a critical instance (the Prague Spring of 1968 would be another) in which the failure of socialism in Eastern Europe is not yet a forgone conclusion. Given a slightly different set of political and economic conditions, de-Stalinization might have marked a turning point in favor of the development of socialism.

Not only did the spirit of the Thaw not constitute a radical ideological break with the socialist past, it provided political and cultural space for a young generation of writers and filmmakers to act as committed redeemers of the socialist project.[33] Thaw-era reformers sought to find a place for their political ideals within the political and ideological framework of "actually existing socialism." When 1956 did bring opposition to the government, it was opposition to its ineffectuality, rather than to socialism, as such. By the early 1960s, when the high hopes of the Thaw had run their course and in large part been betrayed, many Polish filmmakers and writers, among them Kapuściński, began to look abroad to the Third World for the future of the democratic socialist project.

From Thaw to Third Worldism

Less than a year after the 1955 Bandung Conference, the events of the Thaw drew attention to the on-going nationalist tensions within the Socialist Bloc itself, and brought

[33] This assessment is shared by Katherine Lebow who, in her study of Polish youth culture, "Kontra Kultura: Leisure and Youthful Rebellion in Stalinist Poland," argues that in the early 1950s, youthful rebels "can hardly be seen as 'resisting' or rejecting communism. To be sure, they flouted the stodginess, repression, and hyper-conformism of official Stalinism, with its emphasis on austerity and self-sacrifice. But this by no means translated automatically into opposition to the new government's agenda" (72-73).

into stark relief inconsistencies in the Soviet Union's avowed anti-imperialism. The spirit of Bandung had been an important reference point for Hungarian Prime Minister Imre Nagy, who "saw the principles of independence, sovereignty, equality and non-interference espoused at the Bandung Conference as ones that should be applied to the Soviet camp" (Patil 85). But after the Soviet invasion of Budapest, the Soviet Union's relationship to its satellite states appeared to be in contradiction with Moscow's stated support for Third World national independence movements. In response to the Thaw, prominent Third World Marxists either left the party or looked increasingly to Maoist China.

Aimé Césaire, for example, famously broke with the French Communist party in October 1956. In a public resignation letter published in *Présence Africaine*, "Letter to Maurice Thorez," Césaire expressed his disappointment with recent developments in the Soviet Union: "Khrushchev's revelations concerning Stalin are enough to have plunged all those who have participated in communist activity, to whatever degree, into an abyss of shock, pain, and shame" (145). In his indictment of the French Communist Party, Césaire linked the unwillingness of the party to de-Stalinize to its failure to take seriously both the "colonial question" and the struggle against racism more broadly. But far from a deficiency of the French party, Césaire drew attention to the Soviet Union's own imperialist mentality, citing among the reasons for his political break "the lack of positive signs indicating willingness on the part of the Russian Communist Party and the Soviet state to grant independence to other communist parties or socialist states" (146). In terms not unlike those of the reform-minded socialists in Eastern Europe at the time, Césaire

claimed that, "it is neither Marxism nor communism that I am renouncing, . . . it is the usage some have made of Marxism and communism that I condemn" (149-50). He broke from the Party not for reasons of anti-communism, but with hope for the renewal of socialism on multiple international fronts.

In contrast to the Stalinist deformation of the party, "the budding and blossoming of the African variety of communism" (150) gave Césaire reason to believe these contradictions might be overcome in those parts of the world where the desire for communism was informed by the experience of having been colonized. In gesturing towards the possibility of an anti-colonial redemption of the communist project, Césaire brought the struggles of African peoples in constellation with those of the satellite states:

> What I have said concerning Negroes is not valid only for Negroes. Indeed, everything can be salvaged, even the pseudo-socialism established here and there in Europe by Stalin, provided that initiative be given over to the peoples that have until now only been subject to it; provided that power descends from on high and becomes rooted in the people (and I will not hide the fact that the ferment currently emerging in Poland, for example, fills me with joy and hope). (151)

With the parenthetical reference to the 1956 Polish October Césaire places himself in (Kracauer's) waiting room of history, along with the thousands of demonstrators on the streets of Warsaw who braced themselves for the arrival of Soviet tanks.[34] Which is to

[34] The events of the Polish Thaw had another prominent Third World supporter in Mao Tse-Tung. The diplomatic (rather than military) resolution of the Polish October was achieved in part by China's intervention on behalf of Poland. On October 27, 1956, Mao Tse Tung and Zhou Enlai met with Polish ambassador Stanislaw Kiryluk in Beijing. Mao criticized Russian chauvinism and expressed support for

say, along with the builders of Nowa Huta, the tribal elders of Ghana, the homeless of India, and the crowds greeting Nehru's motorcade—all of whom will soon board a train bound for the Global '60s and the politics of Non-Alignment.

In the service of anti-colonialism and non-alignment, the reportage form that had emerged alongside socialist realist literature to document the building, re-building, and reforming of state socialism would now hew more closely to travel writing.[35] In these works of reportage-cum-travelogue Kapuściński's work would become more formally experimental, while also evincing an awareness of the problematic tendency of literary representations of the non-western Other to rely on Orientalist tropes. For example, in a piece written during his first international assignment in India in early 1957 titled "Fata morgana egzotiki" ("The Fata Morgana of the Exotic"), Kapuściński reflects on the political causes and consequences of exoticization of the Third World: "The exotic? I am searching for it in the streets of Calcutta, the villages of Bengal and the towns of Andhra. I can't find it, and I'm not the least bit surprised. India is not an exotic country" (3).[36] European literature about India is often more interested in palm trees than the lives of

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Gomułka. Speaking on behalf of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, Liu Shaoqi soon after told Khrushchev that, "Mao Zedong thought the USSR should treat other socialist countries equally in political and economic questions, give them somewhat more freedom, and withdraw its forces so that these countries could decide their own affairs" (Zhinhau and Danhui 101). The people of Poland were well aware of the support from China—during the October uprising banners on the streets of Warsaw reportedly read, "We Have Mao Zedong's support" (87). Far from a secret series of negotiations, the New York Herald Tribune reported at the end of the Polish crisis, "USSR's Intervention in Poland Averted Thanks to China—Mao Zedong First to Send Congratulatory Telegram to Wladyslaw Gomulka" (87). Notably, however, China did support the Soviet Union's invasion of Hungary a month later. The Chinese government made a distinction between Polish efforts to reform socialism from within and what it believed were the reactionary politics motivating Hungary's desire to leave the Warsaw Pact. A few years later, of course, Mao would split with Moscow entirely. For more on this topic, see Zhinhau and Danhui 102-08.

[35] In fact, travel writing and filmic travelogues have been intertwined with socialist realism since at least the interwar period, as I discuss in the introduction. In many respects the internationalist gaze of socialist reportage of the 1960s marked a return to the earlier cosmopolitanism of the interwar period.

[36] All translation of "Fata morgana egzotiki" are my own.

people, Kapuściński notes. This is not an innocent flight of fancy, but has served in the construction and reproduction of the colonial mentality:

> Nothing of the truth [of India] leaked out to Europe. Kipling focused on white savior characters who sacrificed themselves in the name of civilization and rescued India from annihilation. But who revealed the reality of the lives of the Indian people, of 300 million people? People who were living at the bottom of complete poverty, amidst plagues of epidemic proportions, and under a foreign, absolute power. This was a "shameful topic" and had to be replaced with something else, something more palatable and enticing. And so the literature about India, that which is popularly distributed, is reduced to the Mysteriously Exotic. Jungles and fakirs, sacred monkeys and snake charmers. It is this literature that has fed our imagination; desirous as it is for knowledge of faraway countries, it has no idea than instead of facts it is consuming myths. (2)

Socialist Internationalist literary reportage would, by contrast, seek to correct the false ideas about the non-West that have been propagated for centuries by the Imperialist countries.

It would attempt do so not so much by replacing racist errors with ethnographic accuracy, but by constructing the political grounds on which recognition and solidarity, rather than Orientalist fantasies, could be based. These grounds would be the on-going material struggles of people living in places of structural under and uneven development. If during the Thaw reportage's realist aesthetics once again became avant-garde when the socialist reality it sought to document was a dynamic and contested one, the reportage

form arguably found the content most adequate to its revolutionary potential in the internationalist politics of Third World solidarity. It is to this content that we now turn.

Chapter Two

Black Stars, Red Stars:

Chronicling Anti-Colonial Constellations in Cold War Africa

It's not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with *the now* to form a constellation.

– Walter Benjamin[1]

Between 1959 and 1962, while serving as an international correspondent in Africa, Kapuściński wrote a regular reportage column for communist Poland's most popular weekly newspaper, *Polityka*. In a two-part series—"Ghana z bliska" (Ghana up Close"), and "Kongo z bliska" ("Congo up Close")—Kapuściński chronicled the on-going struggles of these postcolonial and decolonizing countries and profiled their respective leaders, Kwame Nkrumah and Patrice Lumumba. As the "up close" title of the columns perhaps implies, these were not traditional news articles, but works of long-form literary journalism about the author's interactions with both the common people and political elite of these countries. Many of these pieces, along with several of Kapuściński's original photographs, were subsequently republished in book-format in 1963 under the title *Czarne gwiazdy* (*Black Stars*).

Like other nonfiction accounts of African independence movements by George Padmore and Richard Wright, *Black Stars* is an important literary document of twentieth

[1] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (N2a,3).

century international anti-colonial solidarity.[2] But unlike the authors of these better-known works, Kapuściński was not a Pan-Africanist intellectual. He was a Socialist Bloc journalist, and therefore a writer whose anti-colonial solidarities both informed and were informed by the Cold War politics of Socialist Internationalism.

The Polish writer in Africa is of course not a novelty in literary history. When writing *Heart of Darkness*, Polish émigré Joseph Conrad famously drew upon his experiences captaining a steamboat down the Congo River for a Belgian trading company. Whether Conrad's militant support for Polish independence at a time when his home country was carved up and stricken from the map by three European imperial powers made possible a modicum of sensitivity to the horrors of Belgian imperialism is open to interpretation and debate. But whatever side one comes down on in the on-going debate over the status of anti-imperialism in *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad's presence in the Congo had been, indisputably, in the service of the Belgian empire. Kapuściński's presence there was emphatically in opposition to that empire. As a result, as Polish anthropologist Bogumil Jewsiewicki observes in the epilogue to the 2013 edition of *Black Stars*, "Conrad's heroes are white, whereas, with few exceptions, the heroes of Kapuściński's reportage are Africans" (200).[3] What Jewsiewicki fails to mention, however, is that his heroes *had* to be. The Cold War politics of Socialist Bloc Internationalism demanded it. In Kapuściński's writing about Ghana and Congo in the 1960s, not only are the imperialist countries cast as villains on the wrong side of history;

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[2] See Padmore's *The Gold Coast Revolution: The Struggle of an African People from Slavery to Freedom* (1953) and Wright's *Black Power: A Record of Reactions in a Land of Pathos* (1954).

[3] Translation mine.

Nkrumah and Lumumba are cast as the "Black Stars" of Africa, and more broadly, of the socialist world.

In what follows I first examine how the essays in *Black Stars* used the biographical form to construct Nkrumah and Lumumba as international heroes and martyrs of the anti-imperialist and socialist causes. I then show how literary devices like allusion, intertextuality, and intermediality were used not only to galvanize Polish support for Africa's decolonization, but also also as a way to give indirect voice to domestic anti-imperialist tensions vis-à-vis the Soviet Union by drawing attention to resonances between the African and Eastern European experiences.

Literary Internationalism on Assignment in Africa

In the early 1960s, a Socialist Bloc journalist in Africa was anything but a neutral observer of the national independence movements jolting the continent. Second World correspondents writing about Third World struggles were not simply reporters; they were fellow travelers, cultural attachés, whose intended goal was the building of anti-imperialist consensus in their home countries. This ideological task was understood to be in political opposition to that of the Western press, who, according to Kapuściński, covered the Congo Crisis by printing "big pictures of crowded waiting rooms, of bundles, and children sitting on these bundles." Quite clearly "the newspapers felt sorry for [the Belgians]," Kapuściński observed. This was nothing out of the ordinary:

> In the West there is always a lot of sympathy on such occasions. The Belgians feel sorry for the French in Algeria, the French for the Dutch in

> Iran, the Dutch for the Portuguese in Angola. Colonizers are internationalists—they support each other everywhere. (*Czarne gwiazdy* 19).[4]

If the role of the Western press was to generate international support for the 'plight' of the colonizer, Kapuściński, and the socialist press more generally, would serve a parallel function on behalf of the colonized. They too would be internationalists. While Kapuściński would go on to become one of the most celebrated Polish writers of the genre, it is important to keep in mind that at the time of his first assignment in Africa he was but one among a group of journalists known as Rakowski's Gang (after Mieczysław Rakowski, the editor of *Polityka,*), who set out across the globe to report on events unfolding on the ground in socialist Poland's postcolonial allies (Domosławski 104).[5]

Encounters between these Second World reporters and Third World peoples took place in a "contact zone" not fully accounted for by Mary Louise Pratt, who in her work on imperialist travel writing conceptualizes the contact zone as a space "where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today" ("Arts of the Contact Zone" 584).[6] The contact zones that took shape in the second half of the twentieth century between the former satellite states and decolonizing countries cannot accurately be described as "highly

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[4] All translations from *Czarne gwiazdy* are my own. Condensed versions of some of the essays in *Czarne gwiazdy* were later republished in the collection *Wojna futbolowa* (1978) (published in English as *The Soccer War* in 1982). Where possible, I cite from the English translations in that volume. In those instances, I provide the page numbers of both works.

[5] The gang included Marian Turski and Daniel Passent, among others.

[6] See also Pratt's *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*.

asymmetrical," for, as I have shown in Chapter One, there were significant points of political and material commonality between the two spheres. In the decades following World War Two the economic and cultural landscape of Poland was not entirely unlike that which characterized the decolonizing world as the region struggled to overcome the economic and cultural challenges of centuries of expropriation and underdevelopment resulting from the imperialist endeavors of the Austro-Hungarian, Prussian, and Russian Empires, followed (after a brief interwar period of independence) by Nazi occupation.[7]

It is this sense of shared experience that Kapuściński points to in the essay "Zaproszenie do Afryki" ("Invitation to Africa"), written during his first assignment in Africa:

> We have a clear conscience with regard to Africa: we never had a colony there, and we had our own experience of life under the colonial boot. Thus in our history there is something that brings us particularly close to the drama that the Dark Continent is going through, to the fortunes of its citizens, their struggle and their opportunity. (qtd. in Domosławski 110)

But there is, perhaps, a veiled reference to Poland's post-war predicament intended here as well. In the aftermath of World War Two, just as movements for national liberation in the colonies began to gain traction against the war-weakened European powers, much of

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[7] This was not necessarily the case in all Eastern European socialist republics. Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and the German Democratic Republic had relationships to intra-European imperialism (and to Russian imperialism in particular) that were very different from Poland's. Moreover, not all socialist internationalist reportage was consistently anti-colonial in form and content. For example, Czechoslovak reportage films about China made in the 1950s (prior to the Sino-Soviet split), such as those by Vojtěch Jasný and Karel Kachyňa, were part of a program of cultural exchange between the two countries, but made ample use of exoticizing topes while also celebrating the Chinese military's occupation of Tibet. For more on this see Alice Lovejoy, *Army Film and the Avant-Garde: Cinema and Experiment in the Czechoslovak Military.*

Eastern Europe was coming to terms with having been handed over to the Soviet Union at the Yalta Conference. In Poland, the centuries-long experience of being on the conquered end of European imperialist endeavors had produced an embattled and defiant sense of nationalism, on both the left and the right alike. As I have discussed in the introduction, this nationalism formed the basis for certain tensions in the political project of Socialist Internationalism.

After the events of 1956 in Poland and Hungary, the Soviet Union no longer occupied the moral center of the socialist world. As a result, newly emerging postcolonial nations arguably had greater political room to reimagine the transformation of their societies according to their particular cultural contexts—thereby broadening the meaning of state socialism. In 1961 the founding of the Non-aligned Movement in Belgrade formally established a political and conceptual space for the development of socialisms beyond the Soviet model.

In different ways Ghana and Congo became critical sites in the struggle over the meaning of postcolonial socialism. In 1957, under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana (formerly the Gold Coast) declared independence from Britain. Nkrumah's ruling Convention People's Party (CPP) espoused a hybrid version of Marxism wedded less to Marxist-Leninist dogmas than to the particular social contradictions of the Gold Coast. The CPP's blending of socialist politics with traditional tribal culture seem to offer an alternative model for achieving communism beyond the Soviet model. A few years later Patrice Lumumba, the first Prime Minister of the former Belgian Congo, also came to represent a third way, albeit one that almost immediately failed to come to fruition. In the

early 1960s, civil war and neo-colonial intervention in newly-independent Congo made it a lightning rod for both international supporters of anti-colonialism and Western critics of African independence. Perhaps even more so than when he was alive, Lumumba's murder by Belgian-backed forces in 1961 transformed him into an international hero, and martyr, of the anti-colonial cause.[8]

Compared to Mao Tse Tung (with whom the Soviet Union had broken ties in 1960), politically "neutral" but Soviet-friendly postcolonial leaders like Nkrumah and Lumumba no doubt presented less taboo examples of alternative state socialism for a Polish audience to read about in the paper. When the essays that originally appeared in the "Ghana up Close" and "Congo up Close" series were republished in *Black Stars*, they were divided in to two sections titled "Kwame" and "Patrice," reflecting the informal first-name basis with which the Kapuściński refers to Nkrumah and Lumumba throughout the work. In this way the book fosters a sense of familiarity and friendship between Polish readers and the African statesmen.

This structure also served to reframe the essays as biographical (rather than ethnographic, as implied by the "up close" in the titles of the original *Polityka* series). Much like C.L.R. James, who turned to the biographical form to narrate national liberation struggles through the stories of key political figures in those struggles,[9] in

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[8] After an unsuccessful attempt to reach out to both the United Nations and the United States for support in putting down a separatist movement in the Katanga province lead by Moïse Tshombe and supported by Belgian mining interests, Lumumba turned to the Soviet Union for aid. In the eyes of West, this cast Lumumba as not only an anti-colonialist but also a communist, and made his removal a covert operations priority. In December 1960, with the backing of Belgian forces and the support of the CIA, Lumumba was arrested by his former ally, Joseph Mobutu, and then secretly executed by Tshombe. Demonstrations denouncing the United Nations and Belgium for their complicity in his murder broke out all over the world. See Weissman; Namikas.

[9] In his writings the West Indies, Haiti, and Ghana are embodied by Artur Andrew Cipriani, Toussaint

Black Stars Kapuściński establishes Nkrumah and Lumumba as powerful metonyms for their countries of origin. When Kapuściński writes in the essay "Bezdomny z Harlemu" ("Homeless in Harlem") of Nkrumah's formative years as a university student in the United States—where he mingled with African-American activist, preachers, and soapboxers on the streets of New York and Philadelphia (and sometimes slept on benches in parks and bus stations), and studied the works of Marx and Lenin—we are presented with a *bildungsroman* that charts Nkrumah's, and Ghana's, coming into political consciousness.

For Polish readers of *Black Stars*, who would have been familiar with the socialist realist novels of the previous decade, the revolutionary formation of the individual was not a matter of individual exceptionalism, but an allegory for the broader development of socialist society. According to the conventions of the "master plot" of socialist realist literature[10] (now freed from the dictates of Stalinism, but persisting in narratives of the *new* new men of socialism in Thaw-era texts), Nkrumah could be read as representing an emergent socialist subjectivity, this time of the Third World militant. In *Black Stars* we follow Nkrumah from Ghana, to the U.S., to England, where he joins the British Communist Party and the West African Student Association. Under these influences, Kapuściński explains, Nkrumah "Formulated his own worldview" (56). Quoting from a conversation with Nkrumah he writes: "I am a non-practicing Christian and a Marxist socialist, and these two things are not mutually exclusive." On the contrary, they formed the basis of his "doctrine of peaceful boycott," which Kapuściński explains is "a doctrine

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Louverture, and Nkrumah respectively, to give only a few examples from his oeuvre.

[10] See Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel*

of African socialism based on tactical actions without resorting to violence" (*Czarne gwiazdy* 56).

In a similar manner, in the "Patrice" section of *Black Stars*, Kapuściński writes of Lumumba's political formation in the cafes of Stanleyville:

> As a young man, because he had black skin, he couldn't count on much. Patrice works at the post office. . . . Opposite the post office is the Hotel Chutes. A pleasant terrace overlooks the harbor and the river. Here young people converge to drink beer, listen to jazz, and flirt. Like everywhere in the world. Patrice finishes work at two, and after work often goes to the Hotel Chutes terrace. Here the *évolués* gather." (*Czarne gwiazdy* 118)

The *évolués* are well-educated, cosmopolitan Congolese youth who speak good French, read international newspapers, and "are concerned with politics" (119). Pointing to the significance of Enlightenment thought to the emergent anti-colonial movement, Kapuściński writes, "It begins like in every revolution—with Voltaire. Patrice also reads Voltaire, and then will often quote him in conversations" (119). From this youthful coming into political consciousness, we then follow Lumumba as he becomes increasing involved in party politics—from his founding of the *Mouvement National Congolais* in 1958, to his arrest on riot charges in 1959, to his election in 1960 as the first prime minister of independent Congo. That is, as he wields Enlightenment thought against the European colonizer.

The centrality of biography makes *Black Stars* formally similar to a far better known, and nearly contemporaneous, work of long-form reportage about the

decolonization of Africa: Richard Wrights *Black Power*: *A Record of Reactions in a Land of Pathos* (first published in 1954). In *Black Power* Wright chronicles Ghana's independence in part through the construction of a hagiographic portrait of Nkrumah. He presents the political program of Nkrumah's Convention People's Party as a shrewd civilizing mission grounded in Western values cleverly packaged for African tastes and customs.[11] Through this "great man" approach to the biographical form Wright lifts Nkrumah from his otherwise "backward" surroundings.

In this regard, *Black Power* serves as an instructive foil to Kapuściński's work. In *Black Stars* the biography form is used with an opposite goal in mind and to opposite effect, bringing the work much closer to that of another contemporary of Kapuściński's, C.L.R. James. In the opening line of his first long form work of nonfiction, *The Life of Captain Cipriani* (first published in 1932) James explains that:

> This book is a biography, but a political biography. It is not written for the purpose of describing a personal career and probing into the motives of Captain Cipriani. It is written as the best means of bringing before all who may be interested the political situation in the West Indies to-day (sic). (39)

[11] Wright's stated goals in *Black Power* were to "neutrally" and sympathetically report on the African decolonization for a Western audience, and in doing so convince the West to support the development of postcolonial nations that might otherwise be seduced by communism. (A Communist Party member throughout the 1930s, Wright emphatically broke with the party and published the personal essay, "I tried to be a Communist" in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1944.) Underscoring the significance influence of Western ideals (i.e. capitalism masquerading as secular humanism) on post-colonial leaders, in *The Color Curtain: Report on the Bandung Conference* (1955), Wright would contend that the "secular, rational base of thought and feeling" that characterizes the West, is also to be found in the non-West because, "After all, the elite of Asia and Africa, for the most part educated in the West, is Western, more Western than the West in most cases" (607).

The political use of "the biographical method allowed James to move between the individual and his role and agency, and the structural forces that (as a Marxist) he believed determined historical change" (Brereton 24). The relationship between the individual leader and the decolonizing nation is represented as a constitutive and dialectical one born of struggle in a particular social context.

Similarly, for Kapuściński, the decision to structure his account of Ghana's and Congo's anti-colonial struggles around the leadership of Nkrumah and Lumumba was not simply a matter of hagiography amounting to the replication of the Stalinist cult of personality in an African context. Acquainting the world with Africa's political leaders was itself a form of anti-colonial resistance:

> Meteoric careers, great names. The awakened African needs great names. As symbols, as cement, as compensation. For centuries the history of the continent has been anonymous. In the course of 300 years traders shipped millions of slaves out of here. Who can name even one of the victims? For centuries they fought the white invasions. Who can name one of the warriors? Whose names recall the suffering of the black generations, whose names speak of the bravery of exterminated tribes? Asia had Confucius and Buddha, Europe Shakespeare and Napoleon. No name that the world would know emerges from the African past. More: no name that Africa itself would know.
>
> And now almost every year of the great march of Africa, as if making up for the irreversible delay, new names are inscribed in history:

1956, Gamal Nasser; 1957, Kwame Nkrumah; 1958, Sekou Touré; 1960, Patrice Lumumba. (*The Soccer War* 49; *Czarne gwiazdy* 131-32)

To be sure, Kapuściński goes too far in projecting ignorance of their own history onto African people. But he is correct to recognize the arrival of these leaders on the international stage as a kind of epistemic break—the euphoric beginnings of the African front of the Third World project. The *bildungsroman* structure in *Black Stars* thus operates on multiple registers: through the life stories of two remarkable individuals the national and global unfolding of anti-imperialist theory and practice is narrated as well.

In 1978 Kapuściński revised many of the essays in *Black Stars* and republished them in *Wojna futbolowa* (*The Soccer War*), an edited collection that brought his reportage about Africa and Latin America together in one volume. In doing so he significantly condensed the biographical treatment of Nkrumah and Lumumba found in the versions of the essays published in *Black Stars*. While one could argue that in the late 1970s his readers were already family with the "great names" of Africa and thus did not require the extended backstories provided by *Black Stars,* the decision to revise this aspect of many of the essays points to the political significance of the biography genre at an earlier period in the history of anti-imperialism. The intimate portraits offered in *Black Stars* were intended to populate the imaginations of Polish readers with Third World heroes whose stories served to ground the larger political and historical narratives of global anti-imperialism.

GHANA Z BLISKA (3)

BEZDOMNY Z HARLEMU

RYSZARD KAPUŚCIŃSKI

Figure 2.1: Kapuściński's article, "Homeless in Harlem," about the rise of Kwame Nkrumah. Article number 3 in the "Ghana Up Close" series in *Polityka*, no. 15, 1960.

But when Kapuściński lists the names of Africa's postcolonial leaders—"1956, Gamal Nasser; 1957, Kwame Nkrumah; 1958, Sekou Touré; 1960, Patrice Lumumba"—it is not only to present these individuals as embodiments of their national struggles; it is also to draw attention to the constellation of these leaders' countries into a Pan-Africanist bloc, beyond the binary geopolitical configurations of the First and Second Worlds. Indeed, the image of the "black star" put forward in Kapuściński's writing exists in relation to, but is distinct from, that more familiar communist imagery—the red star. In an essay titled, "Gwardia jako taka" ("This Kind of Guard") Kapuściński meets with an officer of Nkrumah's Convention People's Party (CPP) and notices the two black stars pinned to the red epaulets of the officer's uniform. "Welcome my friend from Poland," the officers says, "We and you, we are all socialists and Marxists, like our great leader, the magnificent Kwame Nkrumah" (*Czarne gwiazdy* 73).

Elsewhere this sensibility is called somewhat into question when, in a report from a political rally in Accra, Kapuściński paraphrases a speech by Nkrumah: "Nkrumah moves on to his favorite subject: he speaks about Africa. The principal foreign policy of Ghana is to remain positively neutral and non-engaged in either of the blocs, he says that Ghana will strive for the creation of a United States of Africa" (*The Soccer War* 46; *Czarne gwiazdy* 36). When Kapuściński later interviews two ministers of Nkrumah's CPP government, this inside-outside position becomes evident in their struggles to define Ghana's unorthodox socialism:

> I then asked Maclean, what is the ideology of the party? He considers for a moment and then responds: The ideology of our party is more or less socialism (*more or less*[12] is how he put it). Later he follows up: The ideology of our party is properly Nkrumahism. But it is hard to define. Political independence, the fight against colonialism, the brotherhood of the people, nonviolent methods of struggle, etc. (*Czarne gwiazdy* 62-63)

Resistance to definition and categorization also characterize Kapuściński's reports from Congo. In an essay titled "Bar wzięty" ("A Popular Bar"), he visits one of the cafés where Lumumba and other black intellectuals met to discuss the anti-colonial future of their country. Piecing together the fragments of Lumumba's life from the memories of the bar's regulars, Kapuściński observes:

> Lumumba is a fascinating character because he is extraordinarily complex. Nothing about the man submits to definition. Every formulation is too tight. Restless, a chaotic enthusiast, a sentimental poet, and ambitious

[12] "More or less" is italicized and in English in the original.

> politician, an animated soul, amazingly tough and submissive at the same time, confident until the very end that he is right. . . . And today in the Congo, when his name is mentioned, they repeat the same thing with melancholy reflection: *Oui, il avait raison*. Yes, he was right. (*The Soccer War* 55; *Czarne gwiazdy* 140)

It is Lumumba's very resistance to definition, it seems, that make his politics so potent—that makes him "right."

In this way *Black Stars* subtly portrays Nkrumah's and Lumumba's political idiosyncrasies as viable alternatives to the Soviet model. Both the Kwame and Patrice sections of the book open with reports from political rallies, and Kapuściński takes pains to emphasize the intimacy between the people and their leaders in both national contexts:

> Call on every village, stop in every small town, and speak, speak, speak. People want to have a look at their leader; they want to hear him at least once. Because what if he's the leader of some bad cause, some godless affair? You have to see for yourself, let him speak, and then decide if he's a leader or not. In other countries leaders have the press, radio, film and television at their fingertips. They have personnel [*kadrę*]. Lumumba had none of this. Everything was Belgian, and there was no personnel. And say he had a newspaper: how many people would have been able to read it? Say he had a radio station: how many houses had radios? He had to criss-cross the country. (*The Soccer War* 50; *Czarne gwiazdy* 133)

But the importance of these speaking tours is not reducible to electoral strategy. Far from cynical lip service, political speechmaking is held up as a manifestation of socialist authenticity. Public rallies are represented as sites of direct democracy and testaments to the fact that:

> None of [these leaders] laboriously climbed the ladder of government promotions, pinching votes and bowing to patrons. A wave of liberation struggle has carried them to the top: they are the children of storms and pressure, born of the longings and desires not only of their own countries, but of the whole continent. (*The Soccer War* 49; *Czarne gwiazdy* 131-32)

In the transitory time-space of the political rally, the people and their leaders are brought together in a direct relationship that is expressed in the energetic back and forth that occurs between the crowd and the figures on stage. In the essay "Bojkot na ołtarzu" ("Boycott on the Altar"), for example, Kapuściński captures the power of this improvisational and interactive political style at a CPP rally commemorating Nkrumah's 1950 call for non-violent strikes and boycotts that helped bring an end to colonial rule. Despite the large crowd that has gathered, when Nkrumah takes the stage the intimacy between the Prime Minister and his people is palpable: "Nkrumah stands before the microphone, looking around the square. . . . He begins in Fanti, saying that it is a long time since their last meeting, but he can see that they are all looking well. 'That's thanks to you, Kwame!,' answer voices" (*The Soccer War* 45; *Czarne gwiazdy* 35).

Despite the improved conditions in the country, Kapuściński reports that Nkrumah is willing to admit that Ghana's revolution is an unfinished one:

> Kwame said that one battle for Ghana has been won: the country is free. Now the second battle is underway, for "economic construction and liberation." This battle is much more difficult and complicated. . . . Nkrumah attacks the colonialists: "Their policy is to create African states that are frail and weak, even if independent. The enemies of African freedom believe that in this way they can use our states like marionettes to continue their imperialist control of Africa." (*The Soccer War* 36-37; *Czarne gwiazdy* 46-47)

Along with the external forces of neocolonialism, Nkrumah also places blame for Ghana's on-going struggle on those within the postcolonial government: "He attacks his own supporters sharply, striking out at party bureaucracy, at careerists and dignitaries. 'I must firmly warn those who, appointed by the party to responsible and influential positions, grow forgetful and believe they are more important than the party itself'" (*The Soccer War* 36-37; *Czarne gwiazdy* 46-47).

It is here that Kapuściński's reportage about Ghana's decolonization struggle begins to gesture toward the political situation in his home country. In the concerns expressed by Nkrumah—the incompleteness of the revolution, the manipulation of "minor" nations by the global superpowers, and the corruption of party bureaucrats—readers of *Black Stars* would have found resonances with the issues that had motivated the Polish October (and Hungarian November) just a few years prior. In his Thaw-era reportage Kapuściński had engaged directly with the struggle against bureaucratic corruption and for the actualization of the unfinished socialist project in Poland. After the

crushing defeat of 1956, Eastern Europe's struggle for national autonomy is dealt with more obliquely in his writing. The political content remains much the same, but when the context changes from the Socialist Bloc to the African continent his work begins to take on an allegorical quality.

In this way, within the Polish People's Republic, works of anti-colonial reportage that were intended to ideologically disseminate the Soviet Union's foreign policy with regard to the Third World came up against their own internal contradictions. For although solidarity with anti-colonial struggles was Moscow's official stance, in the Polish context this solidarity was not so easily contained within, and therefore confined to its role as propaganda for, the geopolitical interests of the Soviet Union. Nationalist tensions within the Socialist Bloc constitute, I believe, a kind of latent content in Polish literary representations of Africa's liberation struggles of the 1960s. Anti-colonial reportage by satellite state writers *ipso facto* protested not only Western imperialism abroad, but also Soviet imperialism at home.

In the essay about Lumumba's presence in the café culture of Léopoldville, "Bar wzięty" ("A Popular Bar"), for example, critiques of the Soviet Union's response to the demand for regional national self-determination are expressed though literary references to Poland's historical independence movement. The original Polish title of the essay has a two meanings—a literal one and a literary one. In the suspenseful closing line of the first volume of Henryk Sienkiewicz's celebrated novel, *Ogniem i mieczem* (*With Fire and Sword*, first published in 1884), "Bar . . . wzięty!" (467) translates to "Bar . . . is taken!," and refers not to a crowded watering hole where all the seats are taken, but to the sacking

of the Galician town of Bar by the Cossacks. *With Fire and Sword* tells the story of the seventeenth century Ukrainian revolt against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and Sienkiewicz intended for the novel to "lift up the heart of Poland" after a failed national uprising against the Imperial Russia.

Figure 2.2: "Bar wzięty!" Article number 8 in the in "Congo Up Close" series in *Polityka*, no. 20, 1961.

By stoking Polish patriotism, the novel would inspire the country's on-going struggle for national independence against its partitioners. And by titling an essay about an important site of the Congolese anti-colonial movement with a well-known line from a beloved literary work of the nineteenth century Polish independence movement, Kapuściński invites readers to consider the experiential resonances between African anti-

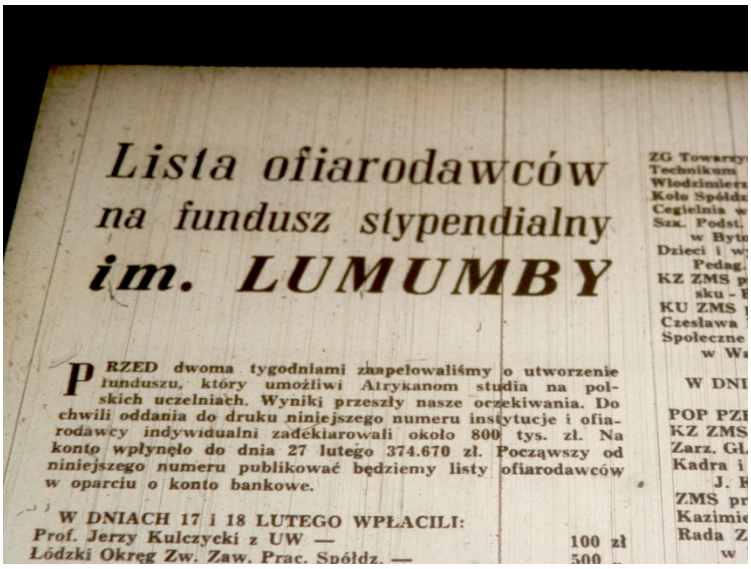
colonialism and Eastern European struggles against historical Russian imperialism. Insofar as this intertextual reference is made in the context of Lumumba's failed desire to forge a political path for his country formally independent of both the imperialist West and the Soviet Union, the title also appears to gesture towards Poland's present experience as a Soviet satellite state.

At the level of the narrative, however, Sienkiewicz's *With Fire and Sword* is a not about Polish independence—it is about Ukraine's attempt to secede from the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth. To "lift up the heart of Poland" during Russia's partition and occupation of the country, Sienkiewicz reached back to a time when Poland was in effect a regional imperial power that struggled to put down the Ukrainian independence movement within its territories. Thus, by using a quote from the novel in the title of the article, Congo's anti-colonial movement is simultaneously compared with both Poland's anti-Russian struggle and Ukraine's historical anti-Polish one. In this way, not only does Kapuściński invite Polish readers to identify with the Congolese people on the basis of their shared struggle against imperialism, he also encourages them to be critical of the kind of patriotism offered up by Sienkiewicz's novel. The Polish struggle for national autonomy from the Soviet Union should take its cues from the politics of Third World anti-imperialism, not indulge in nationalist fantasies of recouping Poland's seventeenth century grandeur.

The struggle for the actualization of socialism via anti-imperialism is more emphatically expressed in the final essay of the Kwame section of *Black Stars*, "Stracony dla Forda" ("A Loss for Ford"). Here Kapuściński once again turns to the biographical

form but moves away from looking at the lives of great men in order to profile a young Marxist from Accra named Ded. “They gave me a Ford scholarship. For a year in the States,” Ded explains, “But I’m not going. If I were to eat their bread, I would begin to think like an American. And I don’t want that. Take me to Poland. I must learn about revolution. Afterwards we’ll make it in Ghana” (*Czarne gwiazdy* 85-86). Ded is a loss for Ford, but a boon for the socialist world.

There is nothing extraordinary here about Ded’s request to study in Poland. The battle for African hearts and minds in the universities of both the United States and the Socialist Bloc was a crucial front of the Cold War. When the “Congo up Close” series first appeared in February 1961, *Polityka* printed requests for donations to the newly-established Lumumba Fund, which sought to raise money for African students to study at Polish universities. On a weekly basis the paper published the names of individuals and organizations that had donated money to the fund, along with the amount donated. In a direct material way, Polish readers were encouraged to understand themselves to be both individually and collectively in support of the Congolese people, and Kapuściński’s reportage helped to motivate this generosity. The newspaper’s editor, Mieczysław Rakowski, noted with reference to Kapuściński’s writing that “We collected 2,687,138 zloty for the Lumumba Fund,” thanks to this “political literature produced by a devilishly talented writer” (qtd. in Domosławski 120).



Lista ofiarodawców
na fundusz stypendialny
im. LUMUMBY

PRZED dwoma tygodniami zaapelowaliśmy o utworzenie funduszu, który umożliwi Afrykanom studia na polskich uczelniach. Wyniki przeszły nasze oczekiwania. Do chwili oddania do druku niniejszego numeru instytucje i ofiarodawcy indywidualni zadeklarowali około 800 tys. zł. Na konto wpłynęło do dnia 27 lutego 374.670 zł. Począwszy od niniejszego numeru publikować będziemy listy ofiarodawców w oparciu o konto bankowe.

W DNIACH 17 i 18 LUTEGO WPŁACILI:
Prof. Jerzy Kulczycki z UW — 100 zł
Łódzki Okręg Zw. Zaw. Prac. Spółdz. — 500

Figure 2.3: The headline reads: "List of the names of people who donated to the scholarship fund established in the name of Lumumba." Below begins a list of names of donors and the amount donated. University of Warsaw Professor Jerzy Kulczycki, at the very top of the list, donated 100 zloty (*Polityka*, no.9, 1961).

Whether or not Ded will be able to make his way to a Socialist Bloc university he is committed the self-directed study of socialism. Kapuściński is fascinated by the fact that Ded has procured an English Edition of *The History of the Soviet Communist Party (Bolshevik). A Short Course*, published in Moscow in 1951. "The press doesn't write about your countries," He tells Kapuściński. "The press is in the hands of the English. It is difficult to learn about what's happening in the East. But now I know about socialism." When asked about whether he supports Nkrumah, Ded hesitates. Yes, he says, but, "Kwame stops half way. He has stopped talking about nationalization, the country is flooded with foreign capital. We must go further, more boldly to the left." Kapuściński is

moved by Ded's militancy and compares the young African communist to a member of the Communist Youth League: "His manner, I would say, is like that of a young komsomol member" (*Czarne gwiazdy* 86-88).

Ded explains that he and a close circle of friends are forming a true socialist party in Ghana. "There will be more of us," he says. "We have just one barrier to overcome: to convince people that Marxism is not only for white people, but for everyone in the world." Ded's girlfriend, a left-wing militant like himself, is studying in London but counts herself among the members of this would-be party. In her letters to Ded she writes that although she misses him dearly she knows that real "happiness is in struggle." When Kapuściński expresses sympathy for the difficulties of a long-distance relationship, Ded is unsentimental in his response, leading the Polish journalist to ask, "Which should be given priority, reason or emotion?" The question is framed in terms of what seems to be an obvious dichotomy to the Socialist Bloc writer, but Ded rejects the binary altogether: "'Ideas,' he replies" (*Czarne gwiazdy* 88-89).

In the essay's closing paragraph Kapuściński compares Ded's commitment to ideas to a castle that is "strong and well constructed, with no need for alterations or rebuilding, the work of hands that do not waver." By contrast, Kapuściński laments:

> My castle, is a second-rate one, it is made of putty. Sand slips through my hands, luxurious, golden sand that cannot be glued together. If only I could use this silt, if only I was not afraid of building bastions. Ded stretches out under a palm tree, a black, nicely built young man.

> Sometimes I glance in his direction. He both resembles me, and possesses something that I envy. (88-89)

Although Kapuściński appears to recognize the politics that inform his own relationship with his home country in Ded's insistence on pushing the ruling government further to the left, it is Ded's unwavering commitment to a vision of socialism that has not been weakened by the lived experience of Stalinism that Kapuściński envies. In this regard, his representation of Ded's purity of revolutionary heart (in his "nicely built" black body) relies in part on the familiar trope of the "noble savage," now mobilized in the service of international socialism. But this is not all that is at stake in their encounter. What Kapuściński finds inspiring about his meeting with Ded is not so much the young African's essential nobleness, but the potentiality of his social context—the as yet undecided socialist future of Ghana. Far from portraying Ded as naïve, the exchange between the Socialist Bloc journalist and the young African militant in "A Loss for Ford" produces a contradiction of recognition and alienation, goodwill and envy, out of which the possibility for the renewal of the socialist project in the to-be-determined context of decolonization begins to come into view.

GHANA Z BLISKA (8)

STRACONY DLA FORDA

RYSZARD KAPUŚCIŃSKI

Figure 2.4: Kapuściński's article "A Loss for Ford" about the young Marxist militant, Ded. Article number 8 in the "Ghana Up Close" series (*Polityka,* no. 18, 1960).

The Limits of Solidarity

Despite his efforts to foster solidarity by mapping the African colonial experience onto the Eastern European one (and vice versa), in *Black Stars* Kapuściński also runs up against barriers to creating a shared sense of identity. In the face of his enthusiasm for the new forms of socialism emerging in Ghana and Congo, Kapuściński is confronted with a fundamental problem of Second World Internationalism that forces him to acknowledge the structural limitations of his solidarity—his whiteness. In the decolonizing world the whiteness that once socially elevated the imperialists proves to be a political liability for the Eastern European anti-imperialists. In an article titled, "Ofensywa" ("The Offensive"), Kapuściński writes about his desire to join Lumumbaist soldiers fighting the

Belgian-backed Katanga Army. “I too would have gone to the front, but I had a wolf ticket (*wilczy bilet*),” Kapuściński explains (*The Soccer War* 63; *Czarne gwiazdy* 149).

The term “wolf ticket” was once used in Imperial Russia to refer to a document with clauses that restrict one’s ability to move, either literally or figuratively (as in the sense of social mobility). Later it was used in communist times in a manner akin to the English word blacklist. Because “wolf ticket” implies a sense of victimhood on the part of the one carrying it, Kapuściński’s use of the term to refer to his whiteness is somewhat problematic. In what in today’s parlance we might call an accusation of “reverse racism,” Kapuściński seems to believe that his whiteness unfairly restricts him in the topsy-turvy world of postcolonial Congo, despite the fact that he is a supporter of the anti-colonial cause. He is almost incredulous:

> I thought of going and explaining: I’m from Poland. At the age of sixteen, I joined a youth organization. On the banners of that organization were written slogans about the brotherhood of all the races and the common struggle against colonialism. I was an activist. I organized solidarity rallies with the people of Korea, Vietnam and Algeria, with all the peoples of the world. I stayed up all night painting banners more than once. You never saw our banners—they were great, enormous; they really caught your eye. (*The Soccer War* 63; *Czarne gwiazdy* 149)

He goes on to declare, “I have been with you wholeheartedly every moment of my life. I’ve always regarded colonialists at the lowest vermin. I’m with you and I’ll prove it with deeds” (*The Soccer War* 63; *Czarne gwiazdy* 149).

But declarations of solidarity and the willingness to back up it up with action are not enough. When Kapuściński and his Czech journalist colleague, Jaroslav Bouček, try to join Lumumbaist troops, they are stopped on the street by a soldier who begins to aggressively question them in a language they don't understand. As a crowd gathers, a young Congolese boy offers to serve as interpreter. "We told him that we were from Poland and Czechoslovakia. He translated this. The people in the crowd began looking at each other, searching for a sage who would know what those names meant." He continues, his frustration growing:

> We wanted to say that we were full of feelings of friendship, that each of us stood in solidarity with the struggle of the people, that our desire to take part in the offensive was proof, but the officer was shouting and we couldn't get a word in. He must have been insisting that we were Belgians; I don't know what he was after. Finally, Jarda found a way out. Jarda lived in Cairo, so he had a driver's license printed in Arabic. He took out the license, showed it to the officer as the crowd watched attentively, and said: "It's from Nasser".[13] (*The Soccer War* 64; *Czarne gwiazdy* 150)

Kapuściński explains that, "The magic of this word serves all over Africa," and when the officer has digested this crucial piece of information he muses, "What a shame, that so many people in this world look like Belgians." Exasperated, Kapuściński responds, '"This is not our fault,' I said in Polish, 'not our fault at all.' The officer shook our hands, turned about-face and walked away. The crowd dispersed and we were left alone. We

[13] Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser, one of the founding members of the Non-aligned Movement who supported the Lumumbaists during the Congo Crisis.

could have kept going, but somehow everything had lost its sparkle" (*The Soccer War* 64-65; *Czarne gwiazdy* 150-51).

Disenchanted by their sudden awareness of the enormity of the racial barrier, the Polish and Czech journalists return to their hotel room. Kapuściński explains that the Congolese people should not be blamed for their ignorance of Eastern European nations. Having once looked through a history book written by Belgians for Congolese school children, he reports that one could easily get the impression that Belgium is the only country in the world, and many Poles are equally ignorant of the existence of African countries. What's more, many Western Europeans are also unfamiliar with Eastern European geography. To illustrate this point Kapuściński recounts the story of a Polish friend who while on a trip to Italy "had not gone far when his car broke down. Two Italian peasants came down the road. They stopped and asked, 'Where are you from?' 'Poland. We're Poles.' The peasants scratched their heads. 'Poles? Poles?' 'That's right—my friend replied—the same ones who fought at Monte Cassino.'" But what began as a humorous anecdote takes a perplexing turn when the Italians finally realize who the foreigners are. '"Aaah—the yokels seemed to finally get it—We know, we know you negroes [murzyni]'" (*Czarne gwiazdy* 151).

The humor of the story's punchline rest on the absurdity of their confusion. Clearly the Italian peasants can see that the men they have encountered on the side of the road have white skin. But there is much more at stake here than literal skin color. The multivalent sense of the word *murzyn* is somewhat difficult to translate into English. While the word does not necessarily connote a racial epithet in Polish (it is an antiquated

word for a person of color, with the same etymological root as the English word "moor"), for the purposes of conveying the derogatory connotations of the exchange between the Italians and Poles here perhaps a much stronger "n-word" would be a more appropriate translation, as the highly racialized figurative meaning of *murzyn* is akin to slave, or one whose labor is exploited by another. In Kapuściński's anecdote, the Italian peasants (who might very well be aware that the Polish Corps fought alongside the Allies in the Battle of Monte Casino) are portrayed as having used a racial slur against the Poles (presumably for doing the bidding of Italy's World War Two enemies). Of course, in his retelling of the story we do not have access to the original Italian word, but by rendering the insult as "*murzyni*," Kapuściński draws attention to Western European perceptions of Eastern European ethnic inferiority. Polish readers have more in common with the struggles of African peoples than they might at first realize.[14] For in the eyes of the West they are the *biali* (white) *murzyni* of Europe.[15] In this way Poles and Africans are brought together as racialized subaltern subjects in order to once again draw attention to similarities between the Eastern European and African experience, and thereby underscore the need for solidarity between these disparate parts of the world.

Thus, when Kapuściński speaks with frustration of the "wolf ticket" of whiteness that sets him apart from his Congolese comrades, it is not simply that in the postcolonial world his skin color is for the first time a hindrance rather than a privilege (i.e. the charge

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[14] The comparison has its limits. As Larry Wolff explains, historically Eastern Europe has not been located, "at the antipode of civilization, not down in the depths of barbarism, but rather on the developmental scale that measured the distance between civilization and barbarism" (13).

[15] In terms strikingly similar to those used to disparage African peoples, Frederick the Great, in a letter to Friedrich Wilhelm von Grumbkow, wrote of Poles: "They were the biggest brutes in the world; King Stanislaw's coach was surrounded by a dozen horses carrying Polish gentlemen and ladies—ugly apes, common apes" (qtd. in Konopczyński; translation mine). For more on the racialization of Poles see Pobłocki, "How Poles Became White."

of "reverse racism"). Rather, it is something of an irony that he, a Pole, would be perceived as white in the eyes of the Congolese—Belgian even—when Western Europeans are convinced of their superiority over the Eastern European other. The myth of racial difference that has both propped up the imperialist order in Africa and justified Western European superiority over Eastern Europe now poisons and inhibits Second World-Third World solidarity. Only thanks to the driver's license signed by the Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser are these racial lines eroded and redrawn on the multiracial basis of international anti-imperialism. Even so, Kapuściński cautions his readers against assuming that the imperialists' racist legacy can be quickly overcome by socialist good will alone.

Meteoric Careers

In addition to the interpersonal challenges of international solidarity, readers of *Black Stars* are also confronted with the impasses and contradictions of the governing structures emerging in the postcolonial world. In his otherwise euphoric account of a Convention People's Party rally in Accra, "Boycott on the Altar," for example, Kapuściński comments somewhat cryptically that with all the flags and banners hanging from poles erected around the stage of the rally, it "looks like a great ship. The ship will never sail. It is grounded on the sandbar of the city, and the people are waiting for what comes next" (*The Soccer War* 31; *Czarne gwiazdy* 42). What is coming next is what Nkrumah calls in his speech at the rally the as-yet-undetermined "second battle . . . for 'economic construction and liberation"' (*The Soccer War* 37; *Czarne gwiazdy* 47). (Nkrumah would

not see that battle through—he was deposed in a CIA-backed coup in 1966, exiled in Guinea, and died of cancer while seeking medical treatment in the Socialist Republic of Romania.)

It is the state of this second battle for construction and liberation that gives Kapuściński pause. He concludes "Boycott on the Altar" not with Nkrumah's speech, but with a sobering encounter on the street following the rally:

> On the street, far from the square, we meet Kozdo. Kozdo is a post office worker and boxing fan. He is my friend.
>
> 'Why didn't you go [to the rally]?' I ask. 'It was interesting.'
>
> 'What did Kwame say about wages?'
>
> 'He didn't say anything,' I admit.
>
> 'You see? Why should I have gone?' (*The Soccer War* 37; *Czarne gwiazdy* 48)

Kozdo's boycott of the rally lends another meaning to the essay's title. His boycott implies a socialist critique of the postcolonial emphasis on national autonomy over the transformation of the economic system of the country. By giving Kozdo the final word on the rally Kapuściński reminds readers that it is not enough to throw off colonial control over the means of production if the mode of production has not been transformed to the benefit of the working class. Kodzo's cynicism about the future of Ghana also seems to speak to Second World realities, where lived economic conditions equally fail to live up to the promise of socialist rhetoric.

The distance between rhetoric and reality is drawn out even further when, in the essay "This Kind of Guard," Kapuściński meets with an officer of Ghana's Builder's Brigade and "hesitates to compare" the organization to a similar formation in Stalinist-era Poland. Throughout the interview he notes how the officer flashes an all-too-familiar fake smile and emphatically denies the existence of any meaningful opposition to Nkrumah's rule (a claim that has already been shown to be untrue in the impromptu exchange with Kozdo). Kapuściński's implied agreement with Kodzo's critique of Nkrumah's empty rhetoric and his wariness of the Builder's Brigade officer amount to disenchanting moments of recognition through which *Black Star* gradually introduces doubts about Ghana as a site of authentic socialism.

In martyrdom Lumumba's character, by contrast, remains uncompromised, but the essays in the Patrice section also offer scant hope for the future of his country. The political consequences of Lumumba's murder are nothing short of devastating for the Republic of Congo. Amidst the unfolding tragedy of the Congo Crisis, Kapuściński once again plays the role of the politically committed investigative journalist, this time collecting and piecing together the broken shards of Lumumba—the person and the idea. Because he arrived in Congo after Lumumba's murder, many of these essays rely on second-hand accounts that weave in and out of the narrative lending it a dreamlike quality. As if in the mournful daze of a wake, he begins an essay titled "Maj" ("May")—a month after the news of Lumumba's death—with the testimony of a patron of a local bar where Lumumba had once been a regular. Remembering the impassioned speeches Lumumba made around the café's tables, the patron recalls:

> He told us that our tribe was not alone. There was a whole family of tribes and the family was called *la nation congolaise*. All must be brothers; there lay strength. He spoke for a long time, until night fell and the darkness came. The darkness took away all the faces. You couldn't see anything except this man's words. Those words were bright. We could see them distinctly. (*The Soccer War* 46; *Czarne gwiazdy* 116)

Despite the darkness that has now descended on the country, the power and clarity of these words continues to burn brightly, serving as a beacon of hope for his supporters both within and without *la nation congolaise.*

Lumumba's words burn brightly not only in the memories of those who witnessed his speeches, but in the material documents of his political vision for the country that remain after his death. In an essay titled "Jeden z czwórki" ("One of the Four"), Kapuściński recalls the moment he first received word of Lumumba's death: "We are sitting in the room one evening when Kambi comes in. The look on his face is one I would prefer not to see again. In a hollow voice he says, 'Patrice Lumumba is dead.' I think: The floor is going to cave in and we will crash two storeys to the ground." Although the separatist (and Belgian-backed) Katanga authorities who imprisoned Lumumba officially blamed his death on a mob of angry villagers, Kambi is quick to point the finger at the former colonial power: "'It was the Belgians, it was the Belgians, it was the Belgians . . .' he repeats to himself" (*The Soccer War* 47; *Czarne gwiazdy* 129).[16]

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[16] Kambi was not wrong. Thanks to the declassification of government documents, we now know that when the Congo Crisis broke out Belgian forces, in consultation with the CIA, conspired with Mobutu and Tshombe to arrest and execute Lumumba. For more on the U.S. and Belgian involvement in Lumumba's death see Weissman.

In the scene that follows, Kambi attempts to prolong Lumumba's earthly existence by listening to an audio recording of one of his parliamentary speeches. Kambi plays the recording at top volume on a reel-to-reel tape player that he has set up on the windowsill of Kapuściński's hotel room. Lumumba's disembodied words ricochet off the four walls of the room and are carried out the open window—into the dark night from which the people of Stanleyville will wake to find both their leader and his hopes for their postcolonial country dead. The scene is worth quoting at length:

> Kambi turns up the volume. Patrice is in full swing. The windows are open, and his words spill out into the street. But the street is empty. Patrice is speaking to an empty street but he can't see that: he can't know that: there is only his voice. Kambi listens to the tape constantly. Like music. He leans his forehead on his arm and closes his eyes. The tape turns slowly, making a slight rustling sound. Patrice is calm, begins without emotion, even dryly. At first he informs, presenting the situation . . . . Suddenly his voice soars, vibrates, becomes piercing, tense, almost hysterical. Patrice attacks the forces of intervention. You can hear a light pounding—he is pounding his hand against the lectern to reinforce that he knows he is right. The attack is violent but brief. The tape falls silent except for the wavy rhythm of the machine. Kambi, who has been holding his breath, now gasps for air.
>
> Again Patrice. His voice quiet, slow, with pauses between the words. A bitter tone, disillusioned, the words catching in his throat. . . .

> The hall is silent, the street empty, the Congo invisible. Lumumba is gone; the tape keeps running.
>
> Kambi is listening.
>
> The voice regains its tone, strength, energy. . . . The tape spins: a maddening invasion of words, *l'unité, l'unité*, a crush of arguments, stunning phrases, no turning back, we have to go there, there where our Uhuru is, our straight spine, hope, and the Congo, victory, *l'independence*. Now the flame is burning.
>
> The tape flies of the reel. (*The Soccer War* 47-48; *Czarne gwiazdy* 129-30)

The powerful afterlife of Lumumba's words is conveyed here through a moment of intermediality in which his recorded voice is once again allowed to speak via the literary form. And yet what is captured in the translation from sound to print media is not so much the specificity of the words of the speech (indeed, we receive only fragments), but the emotional impact they have on Kambi as he listens intently, holding his breath in rapt attention. As a result of the rhythmic, and at times delirious, fragmentation of the prose the reader, like Kambi, is left breathless at the tape's end. Like the account of the brightness of his words in the dark café, Lumumba's spirit is momentarily summoned with the recording. Flickering tentatively in and out at first, by the end of the tape, he has been fully conjured. "Now the flame is burning"—Lumumba's voice booms from the tape player as if from the biblical burning bush until the force of his words can no longer be contained by the apparatus and is wildly unleashed in a moment of technological

animism qua malfunction. Lumumba may be gone, but his words remain and we are still listening.

Nevertheless, we have come to the end of the utopian moment of Africa's decolonization. *Black Stars* closes with two profiles—the first of Antoine Gizenga, head of the Lumumbaist government recognized in February 1961 by the Socialist Bloc countries; the other of Moïse Tshombe, the anti-communist leader of the secessionist Katanga Province responsible for Lumumba's murder. Although resolutely against Tshombe, Kapuściński is not entirely taken with Gizenga. "Lumumba was always burning, he wore his passion on his sleeve," he writes; "Gizenga is the complete opposite of Patrice. Gizenga is closed-off, low-key, muffled. . . . Lumumba's style was to hold mass meetings, Gizenga's—to hold office" (*Czarne gwiazdy* 160). Tshombe by contrast, is a force to be reckoned with. "Tshombe rubs the most sensitive nerve of the Black world, separatism. The whole of neocolonialism is relying on it, on young African governments to be set against each other, made unstable, undercut by waves of tribal antagonism" (*Czarne gwiazdy* 167-68). Kapuściński recognizes the popular appeal of Tshombe's political agenda as he watches the Congo Crisis unfold and Lumumba's dream of unification recede. Far from being a genuine "symbol of the Congo," he writes, "Lumumba was a phenomenon, a meteor cutting across a dark night" (*Czarne gwiazdy* 160). And like all meteors, he blazed brightly and burned out.

Black Stars ultimately reads not like a biography, but like a eulogy for Nkrumah and Lumumba, as well as for a vision of postcolonial Africa that in the moment of its emergence already seemed to be on the wane. But the gravitational pull of Nkrumah,

Lumumba, and other black stars created an event horizon that marked a point of no return for imperialism. By capturing the transitory glimmer of their meteoric careers, Kapuściński seems to hold out hope for the possibility of anti-colonial socialism —in Ghana and Congo, *and* in Poland.

When *Black Stars* was published in 1963 Kapuściński had once again returned to Africa, where from 1962 to 1966 he worked as a correspondent for the Polish Associate Press (PAP). Although his task for PAP was to write brief dispatches, Kapuściński continued to compose long-form reportage about his assignments in Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and Algeria, among other places on the continent. While some of these essays were published in the pages of *Polityka*, many others did not appear until the 1969 publication of *Gdyby cała Afryka* . . . (*If All of Africa* . . .). At the time of its publication, the majority of the African continent was free of colonial rule, but a United States of Africa appeared increasingly untenable. *If All of Africa* . . . seems already to refer nostalgically to Nkrumah's vision for the continent (If All of Africa . . . were to unite), but the open ellipsis also seems to imply that the fulfillment of his vision remains ever out of reach.

An essay from *If All of Africa* . . . titled "Afryka przy okrągłym stole" ("Africa at the Round Table") captures the unfolding tragedy of Africa's postcolonial future. Reporting from the 1963 Africa Summit, Kapuściński begins the piece by laying out the high stakes of the event: "Eight years after Bandung—Addis Ababa. Can Africa show the world that unity is possible? 'Either we achieve unity, or we perish'—declares the

conference president Nkrumah over these next several days" (43).[17] After a lengthy and detailed report of the conference proceedings, Kapuściński concludes, "In Africa there are many politicians, and people sympathetic to them, who defend Africa and wish her well but who circulate closely within the circle of neocolonialism and hinder her movements—as long as this tragic situation exists, the growing dignity and socialist hopes that would allow Africa to stand on her own feet will remain held back" (87).

By the time *If All of Africa . . .* was published in 1969, Kapuściński noted in his introduction to the book that the essays it contained were, "already a little historical." He seemed to feel the need to justify the subject-matter of his reportage, reminding readers that, "Some of [this book's] heroes have died. But those who are no longer alive were alive yesterday and shaped the reality of Africa as it is today" (9). Less than a decade after *Black Stars* celebrated Africa's "great names," *If All of Africa . . .* mourns Africa's revolutions as revolutions made half-way.

By the late 1960s, Kapuściński (like many in the socialist and postcolonial worlds) began to turn his attention and hopes away from Africa toward the social upheaval unsettling neocolonial Latin American dictatorships. Reporting from the PAP in 1969, he wrote that, "The focus of the fight being waged by the Third World against the forces of neocolonialism has at this point in time shifted from Africa and Asia to Latin America" (qtd. in Domosławski 172). This geographical shift in the location of the struggle would present new ways of thinking about alternatives to Soviet socialism, as Socialist Bloc correspondents like Kapuściński were now being sent to cover guerilla struggles, labor strikes, and student movements in places like Bolivia, Chile, and El

[17] Translations from *If All of Africa…* are my own.

Salvador. With this new political content would come further experimentation with the reportage form.

Chapter Three

Toward a Second World Third Cinema

Before I turn to an examination of literary reportage from Kapuściński's Latin American period, I want to pause briefly to consider a cinematic work with which he was involved in order to propose, however speculatively, that Socialist Internationalist reportage may offer a formal bridge between the aesthetics of African decolonization in the 1960s and the guerilla movements of the Latin American left in the 1970s. The film with which this chapter is concerned, *80 dni Lumumby* (*80 Days of Lumumba*) (1962), is a work of cinematic reportage made in collaboration between Kapuściński, fellow *Polityka* journalist Marian Turski, and filmmaker Tadeusz Jaworski. It was screened nation-wide before feature films at roughly the same time that Kapuściński's literary reportage about Ghana and Congo was published in the pages of *Polityka*. Like its print media counterpart, *80 Days of Lumumba* tells the story of the rise and fall of Patrice Lumumba from a pro-Lumumba, anti-imperialist standpoint.

This film has gone almost entirely overlooked in the biographical and scholarly literature on Kapuściński,[1] but my interest in it is not reducible to filling in the gaps in his oeuvre. Rather, a film like *80 Days of Lumumba* points to the necessity of constructing a genealogy of anti-colonial documentary aesthetics in relation to the politics of Socialist

[1] No doubt this has much to do with the fact that the film is mislabeled in several places. The catalogue book that was published by the Łódź Cinematography Museum as part of Jaworski's 2012 retrospective (Bladowska and Kuźmicki) erroneously credits Jerzy Kapuściński and Zbigniew Turski with text and scenario of *80 Days of Lumumba*. The same mistake is repeated on the filmpolski.pl website. The closing titles of the film clearly credit Ryszard Kapuściński and Marian Turski with writing the script and scenario. Tadeusz Jaworski confirmed the latter collaboration in our personal communication on June 20, 2013.

Internationalism. Anti-colonial documentary cinema usually comes to mind what Argentinean filmmakers Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino called "Third Cinema"—cinema made by and for movements of national liberation in the colonized and neo-colonized worlds (the films of Santiago Álvarez, Grupo Cine Liberación, and Med Hondo, among others). Or perhaps anti-colonial documentary cinema evokes the work of certain filmmakers associated with European Neorealist and New Wave movements (Gillo Pontecorvo, Chris Marker, or Jean-Luc Godard's Dziga Vertov Group)—movements that Solanas and Getino otherwise referred to in their manifesto, "Toward a Third Cinema," as the auteurist "Second Cinema" of cultural decolonization (120). The term Third Cinema is not typically used to describe the cinema of the former Socialist Bloc.

While many have noted that Third Cinema was greatly influenced by the avant-garde and agit-prop techniques of interwar Soviet filmmakers like Sergei Eisenstein and Dziga Vertov (Shohat and Stam; Wayne), by the 1960s Solanas and Getino believed that Soviet cinema ceased to be oppositional (in part due to the détente between the Cold War superpowers). Both Soviet cinema and the more egregious "First Cinema" of the Hollywood culture industry served, to their minds, to ideologically uphold the geopolitical status quo. Meanwhile, "Second Cinema," despite its best intentions, was too easily assimilated by the "system" it set out to critique in the First World (Solanas and Getino 120). In the face of this impasse, Third Cinema filmmakers would turn the camera into an "image-weapon" in order "to examine the causes" and "investigate the ways of organizing and arming" a movement for revolutionary change (125).

Notably absent from Solanas's and Getino's Third Cinema manifesto is Second World cinema of anti-colonial solidarity—feature-length documentaries and short newsreel-style films about national liberation struggles in the Third World made by Socialist Bloc filmmakers. The existence of this "Second World Third Cinema" demonstrates that European anti-colonial cinema included not only films of the Western European New Left that condemned their own countries' colonial and neo-colonial endeavors, but also works by Socialist Bloc filmmakers whose films reflected their governments' foreign policy positions vis-à-vis the Third World.

If at first glance the idea of Second World Third Cinema seems to defy the established geographical boundaries of Third Cinema, it is important to remember that Solanas's and Getino's use of the terms First, Second, and Third were intended as politico-aesthetic categories rather than strictly geographic ones. In "Toward a Third Cinema" they established only two requirements of Third Cinema, neither of which were inherently wedded to a specific geographical location: "making films that the System cannot assimilate and which are foreign to its needs, or making films that directly and explicitly set out to fight the System" (120). As Teshome Gabriel explains in *Third Cinema in the Third World: The Aesthetics of Liberation*, "The principal characteristic of Third Cinema is really not so much where it is made, or even who makes it, but, rather, the ideology it espouses and the consciousness it displays" (2). Just as the First Cinema of imperialist domination might readily be practiced in the national studio systems of the Third World (provided they serve local and international bourgeois interests), Third

Cinema "consciousness" might also be expressed as solidarity with Third World struggles from afar.

And yet, Second World cinema is largely missing from the academic discourse on Third Cinema. In *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (1994), for example, Ella Shohat and Robert Stam identify "films made by First or Second World people in support of Third World peoples" as one of four "overlapping circles of denotation" of Third Cinema (28), but they provide no examples of this Second World Third Cinema in their otherwise comprehensive work. (They do, however, give significant attention to First World Third Cinema through their analysis of Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* [1966].) It is quite possible that at the time of their writing in the early 1990s Shohat and Stam, while aware of the existence of Second World Third Cinema, had limited access to it. Thanks in part to the opening up of archives in the former socialist countries over the past couple of decades this gap can now be filled.

In recent years there has been much scholarly work on the Third Worldist films of the East German documentary duo Walter Heynowski and Gerhard Scheumann,[2] but the production, distribution, and political function of anti-colonial cinema in other Socialist Bloc People's Republics has continued to go under-researched.[3] It is with the goal of contributing to the emergent area of scholarship that I examine *80 Days of Lumumba* as a work of Polish Third Cinema. This is to be distinguished from what is sometimes called "Third Polish Cinema." This term refers to a body of films of the late 1960s and early 1970s, such as those by Jerzy Skolimowski and Krzysztof Zanussi, that place personal

[2] See e.g. Alter, "Excessive Pre/Requisites" and *Projecting History*; Hagen; and Steinmetz.
[3] There has so far been surprisingly little academic research on Polish Third Worldist cinema. It is, for example, missing from Marek Haltof's otherwise exhaustive *Historical Dictionary of Polish Cinema*.

moral questions, rather than national political concerns, at the center of the narrative.[4] The order of the words in what I am calling Polish Third Cinema is therefore quite significant—one refers to a form of dissident national cinema, the other to a national expression of an Internationalist aesthetic.

When discussing non-Western cinema contemporary film studies scholars are far more likely to wield terminology like Transnational Cinema or World Cinema than those put forward by Solanas and Getino during the Cold War. But, as Ewa Mazierska and Michael Goddard point out in their introduction to *Polish Cinema in a Transnational Context*, these post-Cold War interpretive frameworks have (so far) had very little influence on the study of Eastern European cinema (2). Polish and Eastern European Cinema Studies, they argue, has tended to suffer from a "double-exclusion." Being not quite non-European enough, it has been marginalized in studies of World Cinema that tend to treat the cinema of the global South as paradigmatic of transnationalism (10). On the other hand, in part due to the resurgence of strong regional nationalisms post-1989, scholars of Polish and other Eastern European cinemas have tended to eschew transnationalist approaches in favor of the nationalist ones formerly suppressed by the Soviet Union. In this academic context, my interest in theorizing Second World Third Cinema stems not so much from a nostalgic desire to return to what are in many respects the outdated geographic and aesthetic categories of "Second World" and "Third Cinema" as it does from a desire to contribute to Mazierska's and Goddard's project of rethinking both Eastern European cinema in a transnational context and transnational cinema in an Eastern European context. My goal in this chapter is therefore twofold: to identify and

[4] For more on Third Polish Cinema see Haltof, *Historical Dictionary of Polish Cinema*.

situate an area of Polish cinema (Third Worldist reportage) in the international context of anti-imperialist filmmaking during the Cold War; and to make the case for a concept of Second World Third Cinema understood not only as socialist cinema of solidarity with Third World struggles, but also as an allegorical mode of representation that championed the suppressed politics of national self-determination within the Socialist Bloc itself.

The Production of Internationalist Polish Cinema

Much as Solanas and Getino would later propose for works of Third Cinema, the production of *80 Days of Lumumba* countered the cinema of "the author with that of the operative group" (132). In the revolutionary climate of decolonizing Africa, Kapuściński and Turski teamed up with Jaworski to write the film's scenario and script in an effort not only condemn imperialism, but also to narrate the tragic events unfolding in Congo in manner that held out hope for the anti-imperialist cause. The collaboration was not at all an unlikely one. Beginning in 1955 the Polish film industry was reorganized into semi-autonomous film units (*zespoły filmowe*) comprised of film directors, scriptwriters, producers, an artistic director, literary director, and a production manager, which gave filmmakers greater expressive freedom than had been possible under the earlier era of centralization (Haltof, *Polish National Cinema* 77).

As I have discussed in chapter two, since the late 1950s Kapuściński had been writing short dispatches and long-form reportage articles about anti-colonial struggles for Polish periodicals, and was part of a group of journalists known as "Rakowski's Gang"

who set out across the globe to report on political upheaval unfolding in the Socialist Bloc's Third World allies. The gang counted Marian Turski among its members. In 1962, when Jaworski approached Kapuściński and Turski to write a script about the murder of Lumumba, Kapuściński had very recently composed several works of literary reportage on the topic in his "Congo up Close" series for *Polityka*, and Turski had written an extensive profile of Congo's late Prime Minister titled "Życie i wielkość Lumumby" ("The Life and Greatness of Lumumba"), which was published alongside the first installment of "Congo up Close." Their work was complementary—Turski's articles tended to be more traditionally journalistic, while Kapuściński's experimented with the more literary form of reportage for which he would later become famous. There were also pre-existing points of institutional contact between Jaworski, Kapuściński and Turski. Jaworski, who had already made several nonfiction films about Africa in the late 1950s, was treated as something of an expert on current events unfolding on the continent. *Polityka* frequently invited him to give lectures on Africa-related topics at their offices (Bladowska and Kuźmicki 46), and when Kapuściński was first assigned to Africa he turned to the more senior Jaworski (a friend since their university days) for information about the region (Jaworski, personal interview, June 20, 2013).

Like other filmmakers of the post-war generation Jaworski attended the National Film School in Łódź shortly after it was established in 1948. Although the Film School had been conceived as the institutional home of the newly nationalized Polish film industry, the training Polish filmmakers received there was not as nationally based as one might assume. Jaworski and his cohort were taught by a faculty of esteemed international

filmmakers and scholars—among them, Béla Balázs, Joris Ivens, George Sadoul, and Basil Wright.[5] While the influence of Italian Neorealism on the Polish School has been well documented,[6] the influence of Dutch documentarian and communist Joris Ivens in particular has been under-researched in Polish cinema studies. Ivens's documentary *Indonesia Calling* (1947), about the boycott of Dutch ships carrying ammunitions by Sydney seaport workers in solidarity with the Indonesian independence struggle, would be the first of his many post-war films that documented the anti-colonial cause for an international audience.[7] He would later be recognized by Solanas and Getino as an important predecessor of Third Cinema, but his presence at Łódź from 1950-51 (and his influence on students like Jaworski) represents another case of international political-aesthetic cross-pollination at the Polish Film School.

Unlike Ivens's films, however, Jaworski's works of anti-colonial cinema were made in the interest of Polish foreign policy and intended for a national audience. Beginning in April 1958, movie theaters in Poland were required to screen short films (animated, documentary, or educational) before all features—a policy which resulted in a boom in short film production (Haltof, *Polish National Cinema* 77). Documentary films reporting from "around the world" were especially in demand (Cieśliński 2005). Jaworski's work for Warsaw's Documentary Film Studio (Wytwórnia Filmów Dokumentalnych, or WFD) took him all over the Third World, but especially to Africa, where he chronicled political upheaval and documented tensions between the forces of

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[5] According to an interview with Jaworski in Grzegorz Królikiewicz's documentary film, *Wieczny tułacz* (*Eternal Wanderer*) (2012).
[6] See Haltof, *Historical Dictionary of Polish Cinema* and *Polish National Cinema*.
[7] See for example, *The War of the 600 Million People* (1958); *Carnet de viaje* (1961); *17th Parallel: Vietnam in War* (1968).

postcolonial modernization and traditional tribal cultures in Guinea, Egypt, Sudan, Ghana, Kenya, Burundi, Ivory Coast, and Congo for the *Africa '60* (*Afryka-60*) newsreel cycle (Bladowska and Kuźmicki). In all, Jaworski's Africa films consist of twenty-four short newsreel-style films and three feature-length films, sponsored not only by the WFD, but also by The Polish-African Friendship Association (Towarzystwo Przyjaźni Polsko-Afrykańskiej), and the United Nations' World Health Organization (46).[8]

While most of Jaworski's Africa films were ethnographic and shot on location, *80 Days of Lumumba* stands apart as a montage film, pieced together from newsreel footage of both the post-Independence Congo Crisis and an earlier period of Belgian colonization retrieved from the Central Film Archive (Centralne Archiwum Filmowe) (today the Filmoteka Narodowa [National Film Archive]) (Jaworski, personal interview, May 16, 2015). This archive was enriched by an international newsreel network made possible by the relative thawing of Cold War relations after 1956. By 1959 the weekly Polska Kronika Filmowa (or PKF), which had been screening in movie theaters since 1944, was exchanging footage with 42 newsreel companies from 32 countries. As Marek Kosma Cieśliński notes in his article on Thaw-era Polish newsreel production, this exchange was "a resource whose value cannot be overstated—especially in particular situations when foreign materials could be used to make montage films for the purpose of short-term

[8] Many of these were made in the 1960s as part of the WFD's Africa Newsreel Cycle (*Afryka-60*), and would have been seen by Polish moviegoers: *Bassari*, *Gwinea niepodległa* (*Independent Guinea*), *Biały człowiek z Yakou* (*The White Man of Yakou*), *Przewoźnicy z Accry* (*The Carriers of Accra*), and *N'fuma* (Bladowska and Kuźmicki 62-65). Among Jaworski's feature-length documentaries is *Zmierzch czarowników* (*Twilight of the Witch Doctors*) (1965).

political needs" (115).[9] Building socialist consensus around the injustice of Lumumba's murder was precisely such a situation.

Documenting Lumumba, Disseminating Lumumbaism

Much like Aimé Césaire's well-know play about Lumumba, *A Season in the Congo* (1966), the fixed temporality signified in the title of the film (referring to the Prime Minister's brief 12-weeks in power) announces it as a eulogistic work.[10] And like Césaire's play, *80 Days of Lumumba* sets out to rescue Lumumba from negative representation in the Western press by transforming him into an icon of the anti-colonial movement.[11] But because (like *Black Stars*) the film was intended for a Polish rather that Black diasporic or postcolonial audience, the rescue operation and martyrization performed here also served to turn Lumumba into a *socialist* icon, despite his avowed neutralism. This transfiguration was not just a matter of setting the historical record straight from a socialist perspective, it was also pertinent to the on-going political situation in Congo. Shortly following the announcement of Lumumba's death on February 17, 1961, Poland joined other Socialist Bloc and Third World countries in formally declaring support for the Lumumbaist government of Antoine Gizenga, formed in Stanleyville in opposition to the Leopoldville-based presidency of Kasavubu, which was supported by the West ("Afro-Asians Rally Behind Gizenga Bid"). The fight over

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[9] Translation mine.

[10] The title almost unavoidably calls to mind Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1872) (translated in Polish first in 1873, and again in 1952, as *W 80 dni dookoła świata* [*80 days around the world*]). Michael Anderson's popular cinematic adaptation had appeared in the United States just a few years prior, in 1956. Perhaps a reference to Verne's novel in the Polish documentary's title was intentional and meant to signal an alternative internationalism.

[11] For more on Césaire's martyrization and redemption of Lumumba, see Tolliver.

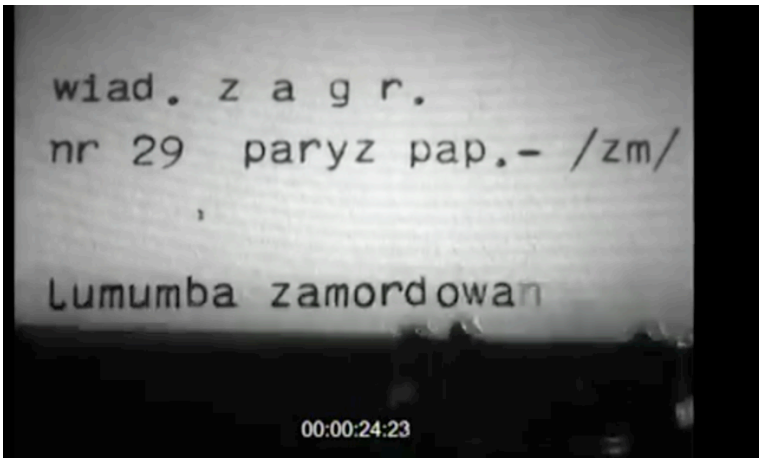
Lumumba's legacy was a matter of great political concern both within and without Congo. Perhaps to an even greater extent than when he was alive, in death Lumumba became an ideologeme of the Cold War as it played out on the African continent.[12]

Situating *80 Days of Lumumba* in the geopolitical context of its time helps us to grasp the stakes of its somewhat peculiar form. For despite its newsreel aesthetic, the original political function of the film was, after all, not that of news in the quotidian sense It was screened more than a year after the events of Lumumba's arrest and murder took place. It therefore had what Philip Rosen identifies as the "production time and cultural time" required for a documentary to "know its history" (64). The history it "knew" was that of dashed hopes for postcolonial Congo as a result of the tragic murder of Lumumba by Belgian-backed rival forces. But rather than succumb to a politics of despair, *80 Days of Lumumba* responds to this tragedy by participating in the construction of Lumumba as a martyr of the global anti-colonial struggle.

It is both the murder of Lumumba and the global outcry in response to it that are the principal subjects of *80 Days of Lumumba.* The film opens with a staged reenactment of the newsroom announcement of his death. In the opening credits and title sequence, the viewer is besieged by the diegetic sound of typewriter keys and the non-diegetic simultaneous announcement of Lumumba's murder in multiple languages, as though the world's televised newscasts were being broadcast all at once. The frame is filled with hands typing on a teleprinter as the words "Lumumba has been murdered" are typed out

[12] I borrow the term ideologeme from Fredric Jameson who defines it as "a pseudoidea—a conceptual or belief system, an abstract value, an opinion or prejudice—or as a protonarrative, a kind of ultimate class fantasy about the "collective characters" which are the classes in opposition" (*The Political Unconscious* 87).

on Polish Associated Press (PAP) cables the world over (PAP Paris, PAP Cairo, PAP Moscow, PAP New York, etc.) (see figures 3.1-3.3). By opening with this representation of the PAP, the film appears to give the work of the journalist (i.e. Kapuściński's and Turski's work) pride of place. But in literary reportage the medium's authority relies on the immersion of the first-person witness of the writer. The writer is therefore comparatively confined to the specific location from which he reports. Film is a medium far more adept at representing simultaneity across time and space, and in *80 Days of Lumumba* we are able to follow the "real time" dissemination of the news as it reaches Lumumba's international supporters.



Figures 3.1-3.3: In the opening sequence, the text of a cable as it is typed out on the teleprinter reads: “News from abroad. Number 29. Polish Associated Press based in Paris. Lumumba has been murdered.”

In this way the film both documents the international anti-colonial movement’s response to the Congo Crisis and self-reflexively draws attention to the socialist media’s role in calling that movement into being. With a series of technological noises, the cable announcing Lumumba’s death is shown traveling up and out a radio tower and then, in a match cut, down to United Nations building in New York City. Pro-Lumumba picketers march outside the building. In the next shot we are inside the building where the cold, stoic faces of white diplomats (including a close-up shot of U.N. secretary general Dag Hammarskjöld) are overlaid with the screams of a Black woman who has disrupted the deliberations on the Congo Crisis to protest the U.N.’s non-intervention strategy. The voice-over narration interjects for the first time: “While there was still time the UN did

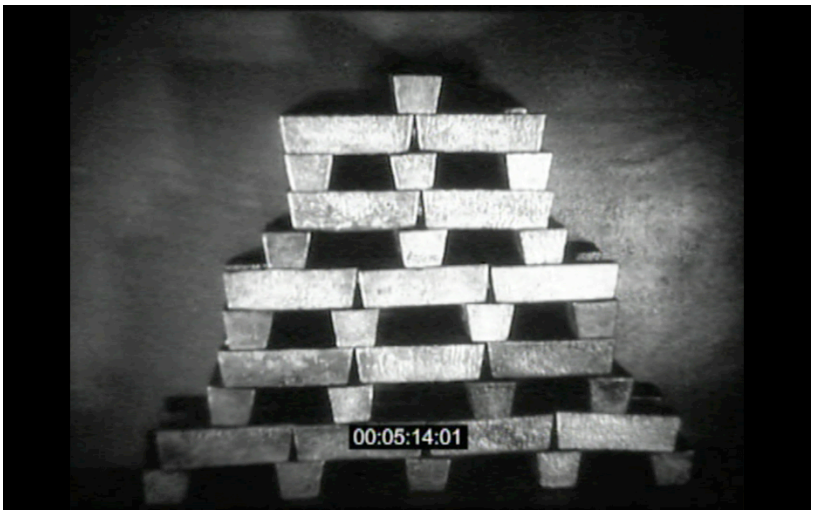
not intervene. Now there are only words . . . words . . . words . . . ."[13] These are the empty handwringing words of politicians and diplomats—words rather than action. "But," the narrator continues, "the world does not condone this crime." From the U.N. we are transported to demonstrations on the streets of France, China, and North Africa. The camera freezes on a placard of Lumumba's image carried by a demonstrator before cutting to an official photograph of the late prime minister. It then moves in for a close-up of the photograph until Lumumba's face occupies the entire frame while the voice-over tells us, "He was the hope of Black Africa."

[13] All translations of the narration of *80 Day of Lumumba* are my own.

Figures 3.4-3.6: International protests in response to the news of Lumumba's murder.

It is here that the film moves from the "present" of 1961, flashing back in time in order to piece together the historical reasons for the tragedy currently unfolding in postcolonial Congo. In a linear cause and effect montage, the narrator walks the audience through the story of imperialism in the heart of Africa—from slavery to the violence of Belgian colonization, to the present-day extraction of natural resources. The Congo is a rich country, the narrator tells us, "But its rightful inhabitants are paupers. Half of the entire territory of the Congo is covered with forest. From here to the ports of the entire world flows the highest quality and most valuable types of lumber. . . . The greatest treasures are hidden under the earth: copper, uranium, diamonds, gold." The montage here, as indicated by the film's shot list, is intended to jar the viewer out of complacency through the juxtaposition of images of wealth and poverty: "99. Close up. Bars of gold. 100. Medium shot. Black children, poverty."[14]

[14] "Lista montażowa filmu pt. 80 dni Lumumby," Polish National Film Archive.



Figures 3.7-3.8: The juxtaposition of images of wealth and poverty underscore the inequality and injustices of colonial rule.

Having documented the extreme inequality produced by colonial expropriation, the film shifts from Congo's tragic past to its heroic decolonizing present. The voice-over continues:

> For centuries the Congolese people have lived in primitive conditions. Lumumba's Party says: No! Enough of the colonial power, enough of racial discrimination, enough exploitation by monopolies. In order to

> transform the country, it must be free. It must unite. A nation-wide movement must develop. Rallies, agitation, meetings, persuasion. Once the Congo was silent. But it was imperialism that took away its voice. The words of Lumumba agitate the people: "Congo for the Congolese!"

The sequence of newsreel footage that follows this turning point in the film narrative documents the emergence of the Congolese independence movement, Lumumba's rise to stardom, and the official declaration of the country's independence from Belgium. But *80 Days of Lumumba* quickly moves on from images of street celebrations after the election of Lumumba as prime minister of the newly independent country to more recent footage of what the narrator describes as the "forces of reaction"—the separatist movement, Belgian intervention, and finally Lumumba's arrest.

According to Jaworski, the political situation in Congo at the beginning of 1961 was such that the only journalists on location and permitted to shoot footage of Lumumba's arrest were Belgian filmmakers (i.e. supporters of Mobutu). This arrest footage was used by all the international newsreel studios (personal interview, May 16, 2015). It is perhaps not surprising, then, that the same footage used here in *80 Days of Lumumba* is also found in a British Movietone Newsreel from 1960 titled *Lumumba Arrested*. The depiction of the event as a celebratory one in the Movietone version makes for a striking comparison with Jaworski's film. With trumpets blaring, the British newsreel shows Lumumba in custody stepping off an airplane flanked by Mobutu's army and climbing into a military vehicle. The narrator announces, "They caught Patrice Lumumba on his way to Stanleyville and flew him back, securely roped." As if to

assuage viewer's discomfort with images of Lumumba being taunted and abused, the voice-over explains in a jocular manner, "It is not enough to arrest a man. He must apparently be beaten up as well. Then put on trial later, no doubt." Members of Mobutu's army are shown dancing and waving their hands in celebration. "As for Mobutu's troops," the voice-over tells us, "they yelled and danced with joy. They have won a great victory. They've got Lumumba after trying to lay their hands on him for months." There is no uncertainty as to with whom the viewer of the Movietone newsreel is supposed to identify. Mobutu's victory against Lumumba is represented as a shared victory; it is a victory for the West against an international communist conspiracy.

Figure 3.9: Newsreel footage of Lumumba's arrest from *Lumumba Arrested* used in *80 Days of Lumumba*.

Jaworski's use of this "enemy footage" in effect *detourns* the British newsreel by using the same newsreel footage to diametrically opposite political ends.[15] *80 Days of Lumumba* uses the footage of Lumumba stepping off of the airplane and then being escorted, bound and gagged, into a military vehicle, but in the Polish version of the arrest sequence the narration is comparatively minimal. The voice-over falls silent after informing us that, "This is the last picture taken of Lumumba" (see figure 3.9). The scene unfolds as it does in the Movietone newsreel, but an ominous soundtrack makes for a somber, rather than celebratory, representation of the event. The music coupled with the awareness of what is to follow (it is after all 1962, and the audience knows there will be no trial for Lumumba) makes the joy of Mobutu's army appear cruel and grotesque. The scene is represented as one of impending tragedy, not victory.

But it is here that Jaworski's film breaks with the newsreel footage. As the jeep transporting Lumumba begins to drive away, the film makes an invisible cut away from the newsreel to footage of car tires driving down a road, and then of the jungle flashing by as if seen from a moving vehicle—in effect recreating Lumumba's journey towards death from the point of view of a passenger in the jeep (i.e. from the position of Lumumba himself). With these cuts *80 Days of Lumumba* moves seamlessly from the realm of newsreel back to the kind of fictionalized scenario with which it began.

[15] I borrow the term "enemy footage" from Bill Nichols who employs it in his discussion of the way the Newsreel film *Oil Strike* uses footage from a pro-company Standard Oil documentary to oppositional ends (11).

Figures 3.10-3.12: Through the careful editing of newsreel and non-newsreel footage, the film re-creates Lumumba's arrest and murder (though the precise details of his murder were unknown at the time).

In anticipation of Lumumba's execution, the narrator consoles the audience by turning to an intimate literary document of his political vision for an independent Congo, "A testament of Patrice Lumumba remains; a letter to his wife Paulina." Much as Lumumba's recorded speech is reproduced in Kapuściński's literary reportage about the Congo Crisis, Lumumba's epistolary words operate here as a moment of intermediality through which the martyred leader of independent Congo is allowed to speak from the dead, thereby inciting others to take up the struggle for national liberation. A voice intended to be Lumumba's takes over the narration to read from a Polish translation of his letter:

> My dear wife! I write these words to you not knowing if or when they will reach you. And whether I will be among the living when you read them. All we wanted for our country is the right to a dignified life for our people, a life without hypocrisy—the right to independence without restrictions. I wish to say to my sons, whom I leave behind and perhaps shall not see again—the future of the Congo is bright [*cudowna*].

Much as in *Black Stars*, *80 Days of Lumumba* uses the technique of remediation to generate emotional, affective solidarity in viewers. In doing so, it (like *Black Stars*) demonstrates the importance of intermediality to the communicative strategies of internationalist reportage.

The closing scene also demonstrates the strategic use of fictionalized scenarios as part of this remediation strategy. For upon reading the letter, the "voice" of Lumumba is interrupted by an off-screen gunshot and the camera cuts to an eagle as it takes to the

wing, as though disturbed from its treetop roost by the noise. In the frame that immediately follows, hundreds of birds are shown flapping and cawing as they crowd and darken the sky. It is with this evocative image that the film ends.

Figure 3.13: In the closing frame, flocks of birds are represented as taking to wing in response to the sound of the gunshot that killed Lumumba.

The bird montage here calls to mind Josef von Sternberg's 1928 film *Docks of New York* in which gunshots are illustrated by the image of seagulls rustling outside an apartment where a murder takes place. In this way Sternberg is not only able to portray visually what otherwise cannot be heard in the silent film, but, according to Rudolf Arnheim, creates "a positive artistic effect" through the "indirect representation of an event in a material that is strange to it" (107). The result is that the movement of the birds is a more effective means of representing the murder than the sound of the gun would be, were it able to be heard, because the spectator "actually *sees* something of the quality of

the noise—the suddenness, the abruptness of the rising birds, give visually the exact quality that the shot possesses acoustically" (108). But in *80 Days of Lumumba*, the disturbance of the birds does much more than visually represent the sound of the off-screen gunshot to artistic effect (and not only because in this case we actually hear the gunshot as well); it also operates on a symbolic level. Through the synchronization of the sound of the gunshot with the eagle's alighting, the eagle is made to represent both the flight of Lumumba's spirit as it leaves his body and the departure of the Congo's hopes for unity and freedom. And in the shot that follows, the circling of the flocks of birds seems to represent the masses rising up in response to Lumumba's murder. In this way the film references another famous example of the use of bird/death imagery in the early history of cinema: the final sequence of *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928), in which flocks of doves appear as St. Joan is tied to the stake, symbolizing both her soul and prefiguring the angry hoards that begin rioting immediately following her martyrdom.

The staged murder sequence in *80 Days of Lumumba* depicts the events of his death in a manner that is remarkably close to reality (even though, strictly speaking, inaccurate because it greatly condenses the time between Lumumba's arrest and his murder). As we now know, after his arrest by Mobutu, Lumumba was taken to a prison in Katanga, whereupon Tshombe's troops, along with Belgian officers, drove him (and two other prisoners) into the jungle to be executed (Weissman; Namikas). But because there was no documentation of Lumumba's murder, Jaworski had to invent it. In this sense, although the film gets the order of events slightly wrong, its representation of Lumumba's murder proves to be a surprisingly accurate one. Lumumba was not killed by

a mob of angry villagers, as was originally claimed by Tshombe and accepted by the West. He was killed by internal enemies who were aided and abetted by the former colonial power. In *80 Days of Lumumba*, the staged closing sequence thus legitimizes a narrative of Lumumba's murder already widely held by the anti-colonial and socialist worlds (to which the Belgian government would eventually admit many years later). Somewhat paradoxically then, it is through the fictionalized scenario that the "truth" of Lumumba's death is allowed to speak. This "truth" is both a (more or less) factual representation of the event as it took place, and the larger political truth of the ruthless violence of the colonial and neocolonial powers.

Despite its newsreel aesthetic, the staged sequences that bookend *80 Days of Lumumba* place it squarely in the genre of documentary. Unlike the newsreels produced in the late 1960s by the American New Left group Newsreel, for example (an organization referred to by Solanas and Getino as a kind of proto-Third Cinema), the Jaworski-Kapuściński-Turski team is concerned not only with reporting on contemporary political struggles, but disclosing their historical causes and consequences.[16] And they do so through the decisive shaping of the archival material. In "First Principles of Documentary," John Grierson famously distinguished documentary cinema from newsreel and lecture films, defining newsreel as "purely journalistic" and lecture films as films that "do not dramatize . . ." (19-20). Documentary, by contrast, entailed the "arrangement, rearrangement, and creative shaping of natural material" (20). Of course, in the political context of Poland at the time, the creative shaping of the material in *80 Days of Lumumba* marks it as not only a documentary film but also a socialist one.

[16] See Nichols for more on the presentist tendencies of Newsreel films

Which is to say, a socialist realist one (in the broadest sense of the term) if, following Marek Haltof's definition, socialist realism is defined as a genre that provides a narrative of "clear divisions between the forces of progress, personified by a positive hero, a model to be emulated, and the dark forces of the past, embodied by a cunning opponent" (*Historical Dictionary of Polish Cinema* 220).

But the use of fictionalized scenarios in documentary cinema of this period was by no means a uniquely socialist realist convention. In 1948, at the World Union of Documentary[17] congress—which took place that year in the Czechoslovak town of Mariánské Lázne and included among the attendees Basil Wright, Joris Ivens, and Jerzy Toeplitz (film critic and rector of the Łódź Film School until 1968)—the following definition of documentary film was established:

> All methods of recording on celluloid any aspect of reality interpreted either by factual shooting or by *sincere and justifiable reconstruction*, so as to appeal either to reason or emotion, for the purpose of stimulating the desire for, and the widening of human knowledge and understanding, and of truthfully posing problems and their solutions in the spheres of economics, culture, and human relations. (qtd. in Edmonds 12-13, emphasis added)

The reconstruction of reality, and thus the conscious blurring of the line between

[17] Headquartered in Warsaw, the World Union of Documentary was a short-lived (roughly 1947 to 1950) association of filmmakers and critics from both Western and Eastern Europe. For more on the history of the World Union of Documentary see Alice Lovejoy's "The World Union of Documentary and the Early Cold War," forthcoming in a special issue of *boundary 2*.

documentary and fiction, would later be articulated as a key feature of Third Cinema. While Solanas and Getino believed documentary to be "the main basis of revolutionary film making," they also understood that "revolutionary cinema is not fundamentally one which illustrates, documents, or passively establishes a situation: rather, it attempts to intervene in the situation as an element providing thrust or rectification" (124). In this way, the staged sequence at the end of *80 days of Lumumba* can be said to function as an "element" that provides rectification of the Cold War narrative of Lumumba's murder.

Congo for the Congolese; Poland for the Poles

Through this act of rectification, the film ideologically disseminated the Soviet Union's foreign policy position with regard to Congo. But in the political context of socialist Poland, *80 Days of Lumumba* represented not only an anti-colonial adaptation of socialist realist cinematic conventions, but a version of the genre busting at its own ideological seams. For much like *Black Stars, 80 Days of Lumumba* gives subtle voice to critiques of Soviet as well as Western imperialism

Jaworski's sensitivity to the problem of Soviet imperialism is reflected in an anecdote about his first assignment abroad. From 1951 to 1952 the young filmmaker traveled to East Germany to make a documentary about post-war Polish-German relations titled *Odra-Nysa granicą pokoju* (*Oder-Neisse Line of Peace*). In Berlin he met with an elderly Bertolt Brecht who, according to Jaworski, told him that, "The system here in East Germany, in Soviet Russia, in your home country of Poland, in all countries under Soviet oppression, is inhumane" (qtd. in Bladowska and Kuźmicki 18, translation

mine). Upon returning to Poland, Jaworski was reprimanded by the authorities for having spent too much time in West Berlin during his trip and was temporarily barred from making documentary films. Jaworski would go on to experience a series of such reprimands before leaving Poland during the Communist Party's Anti-Zionist campaign of the late 1960s.[18]

Although one would be hard-pressed to find direct representations of Polish-Soviet relations in *80 Days of Lumumba*, I believe an allegorical bridge between Congo's Independence movement and Poland's own national struggle is to be found in the imagery of the birds with which the film ends. The eagle that alights from the tree branch at the sounds of the gunshot that kills Lumumba is perhaps intended not only as a generalized symbol of freedom, but also as a representation of a contested symbol of Polish national identity.[19] Because the eagle was taken up as a patriotic symbol by those who took part in Poland's November 1830 uprising against the Russian Empire, eagle symbology and bird imagery more generally play a prominent and recurring role in one the most important works of nineteenth-century Polish Romantic literature, Adam Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz*. In Book Ten of this epic poem that tells the story of a feud between two Polish gentry families at a time when Poland had recently been partitioned, a great flocks of birds crowds the skies when the Poles stage a spontaneous armed

[18] In 1969 Jaworski emigrated to Toronto, where he continued to make films. In 1971 his film *Selling Out* was nominated for an academy award for Best Documentary, Short Subject. For more on the Poland 1968 Anti-Zionist Campaign, see Stola.

[19] Polish eagle symbology dates back to the legendary origins of the Polish people when the Slavic mythical figure Lech settled the region after he came upon an eagle's nest and adopted the eagle for his coat of arms. The eagle became the official symbol of Poland during the short-lived interwar Second Polish Republic, and during German occupation of the country the Home Army (Armia Krajowa) maintained the eagle imagery on their uniforms. In communist times the eagle, which had traditionally been depicted with a crown atop its head, continued to serve as the official emblem of the country, but now with the crown removed (the crown was restored in 1989) (Rękawek).

insurrection against occupying Russian troops:

> The birds hid in the woods, the grass, the thatches
>
> Only ravens round the pools in patches
>
> Walked up and down with solemn step and proud
>
> Their black eyes turning to the blackening cloud
>
> And stuck out their dry tongues from throats dilated
>
> And spreading out their winds their bath awaited
>
> Yet even they foresaw a storm too strong
>
> And made toward the wood an aerial throng
>
> Last of the birds, bold with unerring art
>
> The swallow pierced the blackness like a dart
>
> And finally like a falling bullet dropped. (429-430)

Through the juxtaposition of bird and bullet imagery, not only do the birds become avatars for the Polish rebels, but Mickiewicz is able to convey a sense of alliance between the natural environment and the rebels whom he considers to be Poland's rightful native inhabitants.

The point of this somewhat tangential discussion of Mickiewicz's use of bird imagery in *Pan Tadeusz* is not so much to argue that Jaworski, Kapuściński, and Turski intended the closing scene of *80 Days of Lumumba* to be interpreted as a quotation from *Pan Tadeusz* (although there is reason to believe they did since, as I have discussed in chapter two, Kapuściński makes direct intertextual reference to nineteenth century Polish literature in *Black Stars*). Rather, by drawing attention to what I believe are symbolic

resonances between the two texts, the struggle for the redemption of the Polish nation in Mickiewicz's epic is shown to be contiguous with the struggle for the redemption of Lumumba's vision for an independent Congo in *80 Days of Lumumba*.[20] When, at the closing of the film, Lumumba writes in his letter to his wife to tell his children (and by extent future generations of Congolese), "the future of Congo is bright [*cudowna*]," his promise speaks not only to struggle for the decolonization of Congo (and of the Third World more generally), but to the ongoing national struggle in Poland. That is, to the sentiments Mickiewicz gave voice to over a hundred years earlier when he wrote with reference to partitioned Poland, "I see thee still, fair phantom of my dreaming! In slavery born and bound in swaddling chain" (*Pan Tadeusz* 488).

Tracing Third Cinema in Second World Archives

In his opening speech at the Third Cinema conference in Edinburgh in 1986, Paul Willemen noted that among the political strengths of Third Cinema was the fact that "Militant cinemas avoided the trap of nationalist essentialism, addressing questions of power relations between and within countries instead. These cinemas appealed to a dialectics of domination, subordination and resistance" (95). Following Willemen, I believe the concept of Second World Third Cinema provides a theoretical framework that

[20] Interestingly, the East German filmmakers Heynowski and Scheumann also employed nineteenth century literary references in their anti-colonial cinema. Their first film about Vietnam, *400cm3* (1966), screened before feature films in the GDR to persuade East Germans to donate blood to the North Vietnamese, opens with a quotation from Friedrich Hölderlin: "Oh enlist me, enlist me in the ranks!" In an interview Heynowski and Scheumann said the use of the quotation was intended to show that the film "is not the reporting of an event, but an interpretation and an evaluation" (qtd. in Alter, "Excessive Pre/Requisites" 50). As Nora Alter explains, "Just as Hölderlin had enlisted his verse (momentarily) in the opposition against another foreign aggressor, Napoleon, so do H&S appeal to the East Germans to aid the North Vietnamese materially, bodily, against imperialists in Indochina" (50).

allows Eastern European cinema studies to move away from national paradigms and towards a global one, while also acknowledging the "dialectics of domination, subordination and resistance" within the former Socialist Bloc itself. It is in this sense that a more robust theory of Third Cinema begins to come into view. For Solanas's and Getino's requirement that Third Cinema be "foreign to the needs" of the "System" is perhaps most militantly manifested in a film like *80 days of Lumumba* for which the adoption of an anti-colonial political standpoint arguably made it unassimilable by either of the Cold War super powers.

But even if a film like *80 Days of Lumumba* can be said to be a work of Third Cinema *avant la lettre*, in the early 1960s encounters between Polish correspondents and Latin American filmmakers were largely indirect. Similar aesthetic qualities are only detectable retroactively, with Joris Ivens serving as the main shared point of influence. By the 1970s the form and content of socialist documentaries from these two parts of the world would come into much more direct contact. A little over a decade after the filming of *80 Days of Lumumba*, Polish filmmakers Edmund Zbigniew Szaniawski and Mieczysław Wiesiołek teamed up to create another cinematic work of anti-colonial reportage titled *Czarny pająk nad Chile* (*Black Spider on Chile*) (1974). Much like Jaworski, they combined documentary and newsreel footage to create a short rhythmic montage film that denounced the murder of another key figure of Third World anti-imperialism with which the Socialist Bloc was in official solidarity—Salvador Allende. By then Polish filmmakers were no doubt familiar with the new Latin American cinematic movements that began to emerge tin the mid-1960s, but the formal similarities

between this work of Polish Third Cinema and Latin American Third once again attests to the influence of not only early Soviet cinema on both film traditions, but also of Joris Ivens work (Ivens collaborated with Wiesiołek during his residency at the Łódź Film School).

A more thorough investigation of place Third Cinema in the Second World would need to examine not only these shared points of influence, but also the aesthetic and political exchanges that took place between non-Western and Polish filmmakers at Poland's celebrated Łódź Film School from the late 1960s through the 1980s.[21] While Łódź is usually recognized as the birthplace of the Polish New Wave (the films of Roman Polanski, Andrzej Wajda, and Krzysztof Kieślowski), it was also a critical site in the training of many Third World filmmakers. Recent scholarship has begun to explore the relationship between Soviet cinema and the work of African filmmakers who studied in Moscow during the Cold War, but the Łódź film school was an equally significant institutional "contact zone" between the Second and Third Worlds. Moroccan filmmakers Mustafa Derkaoui and Abdelkader Lagtaâ, Algerian filmmakers Mohamed Meziane Yala and Ahmed Lallen, and Kenyan filmmaker Sao Gamba, among others, all studied at Łódź in the latter half of the twentieth century (at the same time that Polish Łódź-trained filmmakers were making documentaries about anti-imperialist struggles in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America). Moreover, the Łódź film school cannot simply be understood as the Polish counterpart to the Moscow film school, but was, I believe, a distinctive site of cinematic cross-pollination between Eastern Europe and the Third

[21] As well the exchanges that took place between Third and Second World filmmakers at the *Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography* (VGIK) in Moscow, and the Film and Television School of the Academy of Performing Arts (FAMU) in Prague, among others.

World, in which certain aesthetic sensibilities of documentary film developed on the basis of the shared experiences of and commitments to anti-imperialism. Drawing formally and ideologically from socialist realist, New Wave, and ethnographic cinema, the films that comprise this archive express both the utopianism and the limits of Socialist Bloc solidarity with the Third World in the era of decolonization.

In 1976 Kapuściński would once again team up with a documentary filmmaker in Africa. This time it would be to work in an advisory role on Henryk Jantos's made-for-TV documentary *Angola* (1976), which was filmed the same year Kapuściński published his literary account of Angola's postcolonial civil war, *Jeszcze dzień życia* (*Another Day of Life*) (Jantos, personal interview, June 24, 2013).[22] Other collaborations are, no doubt, still to be discovered in Poland's film archives. Approaching these archives equipped with a concept of Second World Third Cinema, like the one I have put forward here, might help those working at the intersection of Eastern European cinema and World Cinema to better recognize the multivalent politics of these works as we come across them. In making visible—in form, as much as in content—the contradictions between the Soviet Union's anti-imperialist foreign policy with regard to the Third World and its repression of the anti-colonial aspirations of countries within its sphere of control, Second World Third Cinema points to the necessity of redrawing the map of Cold War cinematic production beyond the strict geographic boundaries of the three worlds, and with fidelity to the political solidarities that arose from anti-colonial encounters in and between the "periphery."

[22] This feature-length documentary does not, however, share any discernable aesthetic features with Third Cinema.

Chapter Four

Guerilla Reportage in the Era of Tricontinentalism

In 1969, while on assignment for the Polish Associated Press, Kapuściński wrote in a dispatch from Brazil: "Until now in world politics, Latin America—with the exception of Cuba—has played the role of a satellite of the USA. . . . [A]t present it has ceased to be a force of that kind, while at the same time taking on a new function as an independent political force" (qtd. in Domosławski 171). From 1967 through the mid-1970s, Kapuściński would cover this political force as it mounted opposition to U.S.-backed dictatorships through mass movements and guerilla warfare throughout Central and South America. Insofar as this opposition was directed against both the enemy within (the national ruling oligarchies) and the enemy without (the forces of U.S. empire), it offered a revitalized model for the struggle for socialism and against neocolonialism in the postcolonial and socialist worlds.

Immersion in the militant currents of Latin American Marxism ran parallel to two notable formal developments in Kapuściński's reportage that mirrored contemporaneous developments in Latin American literature—the adoption of the diary form and the turn towards the marvelous real that would come to characterize his writing style. Together they allowed for the simultaneous elevation of the voice of the reporter to that of a narrating protagonist, and the introduction of a narrator for whom the ontological status of reality was increasingly called into question. While the authorial perspective of the first person witness had been employed in *Black Stars*, in the essays published in

volumes like *Dlaczego zginął Karl von Spreti* (*Why Karl von Spreti was Killed*) (1970)[1], *Chrystus z karabinem na ramieniu* (*Christ With A Rifle on His Shoulder*) (1975), and *Wojna futbolowa* (*The Soccer War*) (1978), the diary form became a dominant narratological framework for Kapuściński's reportage of this period, and one which reflected the emergent genre of *testimonio,* or testimonial literature, in Latin American letters. Although a certain sensitivity to the absurd and the uncanny is detectable in his earlier writing about Poland and Africa, and the marvelous arguably finds its fullest expression in works from a slightly later period—in *Cesarz* (*The Emperor*) (1978) and *Imperium* (1981)—something in the material reality Kapuściński encountered in the "New World" in the 1970s seemed to call for the kind of marvelous mode of perception employed by Latin American literary contemporaries like Gabriel García Márquez and Isabel Allende.

Likening the Polish journalist to García Márquez in a blurb on the cover of the 1992 English edition of *The Soccer War*, John le Carré declaimed, "If Márquez is the grand wizard of modern fiction, Kapuściński is the conjuror extraordinary of modern reportage." And in a *New York Times* review of the 1994 English edition of *Imperium*, Adam Hochschild commented, "If the work of contemporary Latin American novelists, sprinkled with trees that move and birds that talk, is magic realism, Kapuściński, a Pole, has created a kind of magic journalism." But if Kapuściński's work brought together aspects of testimonial literature and magical realism—genres that are usually understood as distinct literary developments—it was not simply through the pastiche of foreign

[1] A novella-length work of reportage about the kidnapping and murder of the West German ambassador to Guatemala by Marxist-Leninist guerrillas that more or less justifies the guerrilla's actions.

forms. In doing so he also drew upon national traditions of both the marvelous and testimonial literature in his country of origin.

Interwar Polish avant-garde writers like Bruno Schulz, Witold Gombrowicz, and Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, as well as certain post-war writers like Jerzy Ficowski and the émigré playwright Sławomir Mrożek, were well-versed in the marvelous mode of perception and literary representation.[2] A list of Polish magical realist works that included cinema would provide further evidence of the Polish marvelous tradition (Jameson's much-anthologized study of the marvelous, "On Magical Realism in Film," was, after all, based in large part on a reading of Angieszka Holland's 1981 film *Fever*). A regional literary canon of the Eastern European marvelous would include the works of Mikhail Bulgakov, Franz Kafka and Milan Kundera, among others. Kafka's influence on Latin American magical realism (especially on the work of Jorge Luis Borges) is well documented.[3] Eastern European marvelous realism is comparable to that of the Americas insofar as both can be understood as emerging from an effort to: 1) represent the uncanniness of uneven development in peripheral and semi-peripheral regions of the global economy; and 2) to come to terms with the haunting presence of surreal levels of violence in the nation's past and present.

With regards to testimonial literature, Kapuściński was quite explicit about the influence of this traditional Polish literary genre on his work. When asked to define his style of writing in a 1987 interview in *Granta*, he explained, "You know, sometimes, in describing what I do, I resort to the Latin phrase *silva rerum*: the forest of things. That's

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[2] The Polish marvelous also has contemporary equivalents in, for example, the magical realist novels of Olga Tokarczuk.

[3] See Angel Flores's "Magical Realism in Spanish America Fiction."

my subject: the forest of things, as I've seen it, living and travelling in it" (Buford). *Silva rerum* (frequently Polonized as *sylwa rerum*) was a form of writing popular among the Polish nobility in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[4] Part almanac, part diary, part scrapbook, works of *silva rerum* were palimpsestic chronicles of everyday life on the landed estate recorded by several generations of a noble family. By calling his work *silva rerum*, Kapuściński emphatically nationalizes the genre of his writing, placing it in a lineage that was rediscovered and rehabilitated by many postmodern Polish writers in the late-socialist period (i.e. at the time of the interview) as a dissident form. In the context of the perceived lie of the communist system, writers like Tadeusz Konwicki, Edward Stachura, Janusz Anderman, and Marek Nowakowski self-consciously embraced what literary critic Przemysław Czapliński describes as the silva style of "quasi-documentary notebooks and notes" (70). As Nowakowski insisted, "Taking minutes becomes the most important literary job of our epoch. . . . How to write in order to make the word express most faithfully the nature of things; so that it could become a faithful representation of the world as it is" (qtd. in Halikowska-Smith 923).[5] Much like during the Thaw years, a subset of authors once again took up a hybrid nonfiction genre in an effort to perceive and represent the world as it "truly" is. This time, however, the turn toward the national (and decidedly elite) genre of *silva rerum* allowed for a demonstrative break with the realist forms of socialism.

Despite my insistence on the Polish tradition of both marvelous and testimonial literature, in this chapter I am less interested in theorizing Kapuściński's embrace of these

[4] In ancient Rome *silva rerum* referred to literary works that brought together multiple genres of writing.
[5] For more on the role of *silwa* in Polish literature leading up to and after the transition from socialism, see Halikowska-Smith, "The Past as Palimpsest"; Nycz, *Sylwy współczesne*; and Pisarski, "Silva Rerum."

forms in terms of their relationship to a national literary tradition than I am in situating his work within the international politico-aesthetics of the neo-avant-garde movements of the Global ’60s. There are critical political stakes for doing so. If the magical realist style for which Kapuściński is perhaps best known in the West emerged during the Latin American phase of his career—and, as I shall demonstrate, dovetailed with his retooling of the genre of the guerilla diary—his turn toward the marvelous initially took place not out of an attempt to represent the uncanniness of the totalitarian state or to “outwit” the socialist authorities (as would arguably be the case in later works), but out of an effort to both represent and resist the social conditions of the neocolonialized Americas. This periodization establishes a Third Worldist genealogy of his writing style by which traces of Latin American influence on global socialism register at the level of literary form as well as content. Kapuściński’s embrace of testimonial literature took place then not only in the context of the rehabilitation of the “forest of things” in postmodern Polish literature, but in a very different forest—the Bolivian jungle—where the model note taker was not the figure of the Polish nobleman, but the figure of the Latin American guerilla.

While undoubtedly taking culturally specific forms and responding to regional economic determinants, the simultaneous embrace of these forms in such different parts of the world attests to a broader movement in both art and politics mobilized against the reification of consciousness. As I shall demonstrate in this chapter, the incorporation of the at once national and international literary forms of marvelous realism and testimonial literature in Kapuściński’s Latin American reportage reflected broader efforts to develop what I, following Umberto Eco, call a strategy of “guerilla communication” that sought

to do for print media what Third Cinema was at that time already doing for film—to rouse readers from their passive consumption of spectacular media and inspire resistance to imperialist re-entrenchment in both the Second and Third Worlds.

This kind of journalism was no doubt what Gabriel García Márquez had in mind when, at a 2001 journalism seminar lead by Kapuściński and hosted by La Fundación Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano in Mexico City, he insisted that by studying Kapuściński's reportage, Latin American writers of *periodismo narrativo* would receive a "perfect literary education" (qtd. in Herrscher 8).[6] To understand García Márquez's esteem for the Polish journalist, and his past and present stature in much of Latin America, we must chart his literary development during a critical period in post-war Internationalism—when Cuba emerged as the guiding light of the communist Third World and Tricontinentalism formally brought the Americas into the struggle for national self-determination. Kapuściński's work from this period expresses dynamics within Tricontinentalism that brought the figure of the guerilla fighter, guerilla warfare, and guerilla as a political aesthetic to the international table in new and contested ways.

In the first part of this chapter, I will examine the alternative socialist politics and aesthetics of Tricontinentalism as they are reflected in Kapuściński's turn toward testimonial literature in the form of the guerilla diary. In the second part, I will bring the new-world "socialist realism" of the guerilla diary together with the dialectical marvelous mode of perception of magical realism in order to understand what is truly "guerilla" about Kapuściński's reportage from the 1970s, and importantly, what is not.

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[6] Translation mine.

Tricontinentalism and the Socialist Bloc '68

In January 1966, over 500 delegates of Third World governments and national liberation movements from three continents gathered in Havana at the First Solidarity Conference of the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Deliberations at the Tricontinental Conference were dominated by a militant branch of anti-imperialism that stood in marked contrast to the Soviet Union's agenda of "peaceful coexistence" with the West (which would soon characterize the formal détente between the superpowers established in 1969). With the Vietnam War raging and Ernesto "Che" Guevara taking his guerilla warfare tactics to other parts of the Third World (first to Congo and then to Bolivia) to create "many Vietnams," discussions about the value of armed insurrection versus nonviolent struggle were more than just tactical questions; they were questions of political theory (Prashad 107-108). In *Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Franz Fanon had made a compelling case for "absolute praxis" of violence as the "perfect mediation" and the only means for upending the Manichean world established by the colonizer (44). And in *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965), published a year before his overthrow in a CIA-backed coup, Nkrumah argued that the re-establishment of imperialist relations between the West and postcolonial countries through international banking institutions that served First World corporate interests constituted the greatest threat to Third World national self-determination. This state of affairs led Nkrumah to determine that the era of decolonization through rational appeals to the imperialist countries had come to an end.

Meanwhile, in Eastern Europe the matter of Soviet dominance over its satellite states once again shook the bloc. In the first major social unrest in Poland since 1956, in January 1968 the students of Warsaw took to the streets after censors shut down a production of Adam Mickiewicz's *Forefather's Eve* (*Dziady*) in the middle of its run at the National Theater. Written in 1824, Mickiewicz's play, like much of his work, is set against the backdrop Poland's nineteenth century struggle against Imperial Russia, and the authorities were concerned that the enthusiastic audience response to the 1968 staging indicated that it was being intentionally re-interpreted as anti-Soviet by both the actors and the audience (Cioffi 96). Following the demonstrations provoked by the play's cancellation, hundreds of students and faculty members were beaten, arrested, and expelled from the University of Warsaw (Falk 23).[7]

At the forefront of the 1968 Polish student movement was a group of far-left University of Warsaw students who called themselves the *Komandosi* (The Commandos)—in a nod to Latin American guerilla fighters. The group included, among others, figures better known for their involvement in Solidarity a little over a decade later—Adam Michnik, Jacek Kuroń, and Karol Modzelewski. In the late 1960s, many dissidents were still resolutely socialist in their outlook and aspirations. In Kuroń and Modzelewski's Marxist-Leninist critique of bureaucratization and reification in the Polish People's Republic, "List otwarty do Partii" ("Open Letter to the Party") (1964), they

[7] This attack on the student movement and the university-based left-wing intelligentsia took place in the broader political context of Poland's Anti-Zionist Purge, which followed the breaking off of diplomatic relations with Israel as a result of Israel's aggression against Palestine in the 1967 Six-Day War. The suspicion that Polish Jews harbored sympathy for Israel served as a pretext for removing hundreds of people of Jewish descent (including high-ranking party members) from public office and professional life, forcing them into exile (See Stola).

argued that although "According to official doctrine we live in a socialist country. . . .In reality, an element fundamentally alien to Marxist theory has been introduced: the formal, legal meaning of ownership" (6). State ownership, they argued, while Marxist in appearance, concealed class hierarchies and on-going capitalist exploitation in the so-called socialist societies. The critique at the heart of the "Open Letter" was at that time shared by Che Guevara, who publicly condemned the return to capitalism that he believed was taking place in the Socialist Bloc countries (*Apuntes Críticos*). In his 1965 speech to the Afro-Asian Solidarity Conference in Algiers, Guevara framed this critique on an international scale by reproaching the Socialist Bloc for its acceptance of the "law of value" in their trade negotiations with Third World nations. By adhering to market principles in their global trade dealings, the socialist countries were, according to Guevara, "accomplices of imperial exploitation" (Castañeda 291).

The spirit of both Kuroń's and Modzelewski's nationally-focused critique of "actually existing socialism" and Guevara's anti-imperialist one coalesced in the events surrounding the Prague Spring. While students took to the streets in Warsaw over the cancellation of *Forefather's Eve*, Alexander Dubček's January 1968 election as First Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia put forward a program of "Socialism with a Human Face," which aimed at greater freedom of the press and broader participation in Communist Party governance.[8] Perceiving Dubček's reforms as a threat to Soviet-style socialism, on August 20th, 1968, Warsaw Pact troops invaded Czechoslovakia in a show of force that would soon after be codified in the Brezhnev

[8] However, "Socialism with a Human Face" pre-dates the election of 1968. For more on the history of the concept in Czechoslovakia see Lovejoy, *Army Film and the Avant-Garde.*

Doctrine (Falk 77-79).[9] Much like in 1956, when reform movements in Poland and Hungary led to the Soviet military invasion of Budapest, in 1968 the Soviet Union not only asserted its control over its satellite states through the threat and use of military force, it also asserted its role as the ideological arbiter of what constituted legitimate socialism.

This ideological question went to the heart of the Soviet leadership's ambivalent reception of figures like Che Guevara and the militant Tricontinental Marxism he represented. Through his critique of Soviet socialism, Guevara not only embodied political frictions between the Second and Third Worlds, he also potentially inspired leftist threats within the Socialist Bloc itself. Thus, at the time of his capture and execution in Bolivia in 1968, Che had become a *persona non grata* in the eyes of the Soviet government, whose popular reception as an international socialist martyr had to be carefully managed (Domosławski 176-77).

In this political context, the first major work of Kapuściński's Latin American assignment was, notably, not a work of original reportage, but a translation of Che Guevara's *Bolivian Diary*. In the months following Guevara's execution, the original Spanish version of his first-person account of the Bolivian guerilla struggle was published posthumously in Cuba. Editions in French, Italian, German, English, Portuguese, Chinese and over half a dozen other languages appeared nearly simultaneously (Castro 70; Jensen).[10] Kapuściński's Polish edition was published the

[9] The Doctrine justified the invasion of a Socialist Bloc country by the Warsaw Pact militaries when it was perceived that anti-socialist forces were attempting to move a socialist country towards capitalism.

[10] The *Bolivian Diary* has a compelling publication history. Found among Guevara's belongings when he was captured by the Bolivian military, the diary was immediately recognized by the Bolivian

following year in 1969. With the exception of Mao's *Little Red Book*, which began its international circulation in 1967, perhaps no other anti-imperialist literary document of the second half of the twentieth century captivated the international Left like the *Bolivian Diary*.

One would be hard-pressed to characterize Guevara's account of guerrilla life in the Andes as a literary masterpiece. Nor is it a particularly inspired document of military strategy, mired as it is in the *foco's* deteriorating circumstances. But in the aftermath of Guevara's death, the international circulation of his tragic revolutionary testimony served to consolidate the guerilla political and aesthetic sensibilities of Tricontinentalism—and that of its First and Second World fellow travelers—into an international socialist "counter public." In this way, the cultural signification of the diary belies the plodding day-to-day it chronicles and represents, from the standpoint of anti-imperialist Internationalism, what Régis Debray calls the "'becoming-material' force of symbolic forms" (8).

Che's diary is also arguably among the first internationally significant works of Latin American *testimonio.*[11] While testimonial literature is certainly not reducible to the diary form (indeed, it more often takes the form of biography or memoir), it was

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government to be both politically useful (they claimed to cite its contents when arresting and trying political prisoners) and economically valuable. While the regime negotiated six-figure contracts with U.S. and French publishers for the rights to the diary, Bolivia's Interior Minister and Chief of Intelligence, Antonio Areguedas, smuggled copies of the diary to Cuba supporters, who delivered it to Castro in March 1968 (Waters 37-38). "Working with accelerated speed and great secrecy," Mary-Alice Waters writes in her introduction to the 1994 English edition of the *Bolivian Diary*, ". . . [Castro] arranged for its virtually simultaneous translation and publication inside and outside Cuba in eight different editions. On July 1, 1968, the Cuban government published the diary, distributing hundreds of thousands of copies free of charge to the Cuban people" (38). In a televised address, Castro acknowledged that the publication of the diary by the Cuban government had "ruined a number of shady and grossly mercenary business deals in connection with the document"(qtd. in Waters 38).

[11] Miguel Barnet's *Biography of a Runaway Slave* (first published in 1966) is more frequently pointed to as an early example of the genre.

championed by Cuba's Casas de las Américas—the publishing house and institution created in the months following the revolution whose expressed mission was to create cultural ties with other Latin American and Caribbean countries (Malitsky 208). Unlike writing traditional diary entries, creating testimonial literature is not a private, leisurely pastime. According to George Yúdice, *testimonio* is best understood as:

> an authentic narrative, told by a witness who is moved to narrate by the urgency of a situation (e.g. war, oppression, revolution, etc.). Emphasizing popular oral discourse, the witness portrays his or her own experience as a representative of a collective memory and identity. Truth is summoned in the cause of denouncing a present situation of exploitation and oppression or exorcising and setting aright official history. (17)[12]

Whereas the diary chronicles private life to preserve it for its own sake, *testimonios* are "forward looking in that they envision a transformed society. It is the desire to revolutionize which motivates the making of the testimony which is seen as a weapon on the cultural front" (Gugelberger and Kearney 9). In this respect guerilla diaries have more in common with testimonial literature than with traditional diaries.

Testimonial literature also represents international developments in socialist aesthetics that in many ways harken back to earlier Soviet experimentation with the reportage form. Comparing *testimonio* to the aesthetic tendencies in the interwar Soviet avant-garde, Joshua Malitsky notes that "Cuban 'testimonial' writing, like factography,

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[12] For a good example of testimonial literature see *I, Rigoberta Menchu* (first published in 1983), a work told to Venezuelan author Elisabeth Burgos-Debray by an indigenous Guatemalan woman, Rigoberta Menchu, about her community's struggle for justice against military oppression during the country's civil war.

emphasized the immediacy of diaries, reports, and other forms of representation of everyday experiences" (208). And like factography, it "constituted a lively and functional alternative to socialist realism, effectively responding to some of the revolutionary process at the time" (Luis Camnitzer, qtd. in Malitsky 208). As an example of alternative socialist realist aesthetics, the translation and circulation of the *Bolivian Diary* in Poland moved the socialist project forward in Eastern Europe at the level of form.

Kapuściński's translation of the *Bolivian Diary* also attests to the limits of the Soviet management of Che Guevara's legacy, for the Polish edition of the *Bolivian Diary* represents an attempt to, quite literally, translate militant Latin American politics for an Eastern European audience. The *Diary*'s "translatability"—a quality Walter Benjamin defined in "The Task of the Translator" as having to do with whether "an adequate translator will ever be found among the totality of its readers" and whether the nature of a text "lends itself to translation and, therefore, in view of the significance of the mode, calls for it"—depended upon readers approaching the Polish edition of the *Bolivian Diary* as a kind of political transmission from one satellite region to another (70).

The Polish edition of the diary, *Dziennik z Boliwii* (Kapuściński's is still the only Polish translation) begins with a short preface that precedes Castro's famously eulogistic introduction and testifies to Che's mixed reception in the Socialist Bloc. While the very fact of the Polish edition of the diary seems to indicate an enthusiasm for (or at least fascination with) the romantic Marxisms emerging in the revolutionary tempest of Latin America, in the preface Kapuściński indicts Guevara's guerilla tactics, more or less in accordance with the Soviet position. He begins by framing the diary as a text of world-

historical significance. Quoting and extrapolating from the *Bolivian Diary*'s opening line, he writes:

> "Today begins a new phase." This first sentence of the diary is at the same time a commentary on the political philosophy of Guevara. Che treated the Bolivia campaign as one stage in the great revolutionary process, which is taking place in Latin America and more widely in the countries of the Third World. (5)[13]

Thus, from the outset, Kapuściński affirms the centrality of Latin America to the contemporary phase of the world revolutionary struggle. But he also (perhaps in an attempt to explain Che's ultimate defeat) criticizes *focoismo* for its failure to adequately respond to the material conditions that characterize underdeveloped parts of the world.

While Kapuściński acknowledges the existence of "objective" revolutionary conditions in many Latin American countries (especially with regards to their neocolonial relationship to the United States), he contends that the necessary "subjective" conditions seem to be lacking. The Left parties in Latin America "are not in a position to begin revolution—they are too weak, too divided [*skłocone*]" (7). In the face of these flagging parties, Kapuściński explains, Guevara's theory of *focoismo* called for abandoning the bourgeois city-centers and taking to the mountains in order to recruit the peasantry to take up arms. While "[t]he majority of communist parties on the continent believed that armed struggle was one possibility," it was "not the only form of action" (9). As if to settle the matter, Kapuściński adds, "This was a topic of discussion at the last Moscow Conference. Today this debate has lost some of its intensity and has become very matter-of-fact" (9-

[13] This and all translations of the Polish edition of the *Bolivian Diary* (*Dziennik z Boliwii*) are my own.

10). *Focoismo* is not only "not the only form of action" required of the present political situation, it is a foolhardy one.

Kapuściński backs up Moscow's criticism of Che's tactics by drawing upon the journalistic authority of his first-person experience in the mountains of Bolivia: "In the spring of 1968 I walked the trails of this region, I know the terrain on which Che fought. It is a great wilderness, the villages are divided by dozens of kilometers. Here and there a cottage or two—three cottages and again you might march for hours and not find any trace of human life" (9). Under these conditions, he imagines, it would be difficult to explain to a peasant that "his country is being exploited by American banks, because he does not even know what a bank is" (9).

And yet, despite these misgivings, Kapuściński's assessment of Che is far from an un-nuanced regurgitation of the Soviet party line. On the one hand, he rejects Fidel Castro's attack on the Bolivian Communist Party for its failure to support Che (an attack put forward in Castro's introduction to the *Diary*) as "simply unjust" because, according to Kapuściński, "the Bolivian Communist Party is small and weak and broken" (10). On the other, he implores his readers to "remember this fact—the majority of guerrillas in Che's unit were members of this party" (10). The Communist Party/*foco* binary is thus presented here to be a false one. In Kapuściński's eyes, it seems, one can be at once both a good party member and a guerrilla renegade. In the final instance, Kapuściński seems to brush aside his reservations about Che with an appeal to the romantic, rather than strictly rational, sensibilities of his readers. In the emphatic closing line of the preface he writes,

"The diary is one of the most beautiful and moving documents of our epoch, written by a revolutionary soldier" (10). The impetuous Che gives way to the inimitable Che.

It is impossible to know whether the criticism of *focoismo* put forward in the preface to the Polish edition of the *Bolivian Diary* reflects Kapuściński's personal political views or, as some believe, is the result of a necessary compromise made with the censors to frame the diary in terms favorable to the Party.[14] What interests me about the preface is not so much the intentions of its author, but the way these ambivalences reflect the tensions in Socialist Internationalism in the era of Cold War détente and Third World Tricontinentalism. When at the end of the preface Kapuściński describes the diary as "a difficult document to translate," this difficulty seems to be not so much a linguistic one as an ideological one (10).

The "Che question" would be raised anew six years later in the essay "Guevara i Allende" ("Guevara and Allende"), published in the volume *Christ with a Rifle on His Shoulder* (first published in 1975). Here Kapuściński resolves some of the contradictions expressed in his preface to the *Bolivian Diary* by resisting the characterization of Che's tactics as contrary to and irreconcilable with more traditional party politics. "Guevara and Allende" opens with a question posed at a speaking engagement in Poland. Kapuściński has been asked to comment on the political approaches of Che Guevara and Salvador Allende, the late Chilean president and Socialist Bloc ally recently murdered in Augusto Pinochet's 1973 CIA-backed coup. "Which one of them was right?" the audience member asks, leading Kapuściński to reflect, "In this question there is a hidden assumption that only one of them can be right, and here the audience is waiting for me to make a choice

[14] For more on this question see Domosławski 177.

between the path of Che Guevara and the path of Salvador Allende" (140).[15] In the compare and contrast exercise that follows, Kapuściński rejects the terms of the question, arguing that the two figures represent two tactical sides of the same struggle. Their different approaches are to be understood as a difference of temperament rather than of politics.

The ideological effect of comparing Che's guerilla tactics to Allende's more traditional political approach is to retroactively redeem Guevara from Moscow's characterization of the Argentine guerrilla as a reckless voluntarist:

> At some point in his life Guevara quits his position as cabinet minister, leaves his desk and departs for Bolivia, where he organizes a band of guerrillas. He dies leading these guerrillas. Allende is the opposite: Allende dies defending his desk, defending his presidential office, from which—as he always said—'they will have to carry me out in wooden pajamas,' which is to say—in a coffin. On the outside these deaths seem very different, but in reality the difference is only in the place, time and external circumstances. Allende and Guevara gave their lives for the power of the people. The first—defending it, the second—fighting for it. (140)

In both Guevara's and Allende's deaths, Kapuściński argues, one finds, "a kind of absolute determination, a kind of consciously-chosen point of no return, a kind of crazy dignity" (141-142), which is grounded in their shared commitment to ethical political action. "This rule of moral integrity," Kapuściński insists, "is a feature of the Latin

[15] This and all translations of "Guevara and Allende" are my own.

American Left" (146). Having been raised in a world of political corruption and government-sponsored torture and terror campaigns, Latin American revolutionaries, Kapuściński explains, oppose this world through honest and ethical actions, and "Guevara and Allende are the best representatives of this attitude, this school of thought" (146). It is for this reason that Kapuściński holds up both figures as political role models for the Polish Left. "Do we find in their actions the conscious creation of a model for future generations, a model for the world for which they fought and died?" he asks at the end of the essay, "This is an important question" (147). Having drawn the two emblematic figures of Latin American socialism closer together on the basis of their revolutionary morality, Kapuściński returns to the question with which he began: "Can one ask which one of them was right? They were both right. They acted in different circumstances, but the purpose of their actions was the same. . . . They both wrote the first chapter in the history of revolution in Latin America. This history is only just being written, is only just being created" (147). Thus, much like his portrayals of Nkrumah and Lumumba in the early 1960s, Kapuściński finds in Guevara and Allende (and by extension Latin American socialism) models for a more ethical and authentic socialist politics.

The Guerilla Diary as Guerilla Form

So far I have been examining the guerilla diary as a bearer of political content, but as the diary form worked its way dialogically into Kapuściński's reportage, the guerilla quality it imparted was also a formal one. In the title essay in *Christ with a Rifle on His Shoulder*,

for example, Kapuściński tells the story of a student movement leader in La Paz, Guillermo Veliz, who takes up with a *foco.* Veliz's personal account of his experience fighting in the Andes has been recorded on tape, and Kapuściński "listened to the tape in the rector's office several times and transcribed the words exactly" (69). Much like the representation of Lumumba's tape-recorded speech in *Black Stars*, here we once again experience the remediation of a sound recording in literary form. Here Kapuściński's transcription of the tape recording of Veliz's tale gives the essay the structure and tone of a guerrilla diary:

> In the morning we set off for Teoponte, three hundred kilometers to the north of La Paz. . . . No one knew the terrain. . . . In his writings Che had indicated that at all costs we must engage the peasants. But we couldn't go into the villages because the army was stationed in the villages. Moreover, no one lived in this area. It was a world without people. The jungle is like a desert, only green. There was nothing to eat, nothing to drink. (64)

After several pages the tape ends but Kapuściński continues to hear the voice of the young guerrilla in his head as he attends a meeting of student militants. There Veliz's voice gives way to that of another guerrilla figure, the deceased Néstor Paz Zamora, whose letters to his wife (written in his own guerrilla diary) are read out loud by his comrades at the meeting. As with the epistolary ending of *80 Days of Lumumba*, in which Lumumba reads his final letter to his wife, the reproduction of these letters allows a martyr of the Third World struggle to speak from the dead. The letters serve not only as original documents that grant Kapuściński's reportage journalistic authority, but insofar

as their remediation transforms the piece into a work that itself resembles a guerrilla diary, they also grant it revolutionary credibility on a formal level.

In addition to credibility, the guerilla diary also lent Kapuściński's reportage a formal means of tackling a major theoretical concern of his writing from this period—the spectacular nature of mass media and the journalist's complicity, as a maker of media, in the reproduction of the spectacle. The volumes *Christ with a Rifle on His Shoulder* and *The Soccer War* contain not so much news stories, but the story of getting the news, and frequently take the form of diary-like accounts of the work of the socialist "guerilla" journalist. The critique of the media put forward in these accounts is a global and structural one rather than a national one. This is to say, Kapuściński's analysis of the media and how it operates is as much (if not more so) an anti-capitalist critique as it is a critique of the socialist media. Although arguably censorship by the socialist state may have forced Kapuściński to direct this critique solely against the West, taking the stated anti-capitalist terms of his critique at face-value allows us to put this body of work productively in conversation with that of a wide array of media theorists of the period (e.g. Guy Debord, Régis Debray, and Marshall McLuhan) rather than pigeon-hole it as an example of Eastern European dissidence. In fact, when Kapuściński explains in the essay "The Soccer War" (in the volume by the same name) how he "wrote the dispatch that was later printed in the newspapers at home," he boasts that "José Malaga let the dispatch go out before all the others waiting to be sent and released it without the approval of military censors (it was, after all, written in Polish)" (182).[16] The Polish communist press is

[16] All quotations from "The Soccer War" are taken from the 1992 English edition.

represented here as less censored than its Western counterparts by virtue of the country's minor language!

In "The Soccer War," Kapuściński reflects on the role of the mass media while reporting on the 1969 conflict between El Salvador and Honduras. A sports rivalry between the two countries has escalated to full-scale war, and Kapuściński is among a group of international journalists attempting to cover the conflict in a range of news media. Since what is reported in this essay is not the story of the war itself, but the story (written nearly ten years after the event of the Soccer War) of Kapuściński trying to get the story for the Polish Associated Press, the reader is confronted not with an urgent news event, but with an attempt to understand the meaning of both the war and its coverage.

Recalling the Western news crews' approach to capturing scenes of the conflict for TV and radio, he writes:

> The television cameramen said they had to push forward, to the front line, to film soldiers in action, firing, dying. Gregor Straub of NBC said he had to have a close-up of a soldier's face dripping with sweat. Rodolfo Carillo of CBS said he had to catch a despondent commander sitting under a bush and weeping because he had lost his whole unit. A French cameraman wanted a panorama shot with a Salvadoran unit charging a Honduran unit from one side, or vice versa. Somebody else wanted to capture an image of a soldier carrying his dead comrade. The radio reporters sided with the cameramen. One wanted to record the cries of a casualty summoning help, growing weaker and weaker, until he breathed his last breath, Charles

> Meadows of Radio Canada wanted the voice of a soldier cursing war amid a hellish racket of gunfire. Naotake Mochida of Radio Japan wanted the bark of an officer shouting to his commander over the roar of artillery—using a Japanese field telephone. (168)

The specificity of these contrived images and sounds is reproduced here to comical effect—in contradistinction to the "authentic media" of the guerrilla diary, the supposedly uncensored press of the "free world" sends reporters not to cover conflicts as they unfold, but to capture pre-determined images, whose mise-en-scène conforms to expectations shaped by the Hollywood culture industry.[17] The Western reporters of the war between Honduras and El Salvador seek to mobilize a familiar sign system whose meaning regresses to a pure form of "war." As Roland Barthes tells us, in so regressing, "meaning leaves its contingency behind; it empties itself, it becomes impoverished, history evaporates, only the letter remains" (116).

For Kapuściński the impoverishment of meaning that characterizes televised war coverage seems to be constitutive of both its production and its reception. Reproducing the editing of a typical evening news broadcast he writes:

> No war can be conveyed over a distance. Somebody sits eating dinner and watching television: pillars of earth blown into the air; *cut*—the tracks of a charging tank; *cut*—soldiers falling and writhing in pain;—and the man watching television gets angry and curses because while he was gaping at

[17] The goals of the cameramen as represented here call to mind the quote from Feuerbach with which Debord begins *Society of the Spectacle*: "But certainly for the present age, which prefers the sign to the thing signified, the copy to the original, representation to reality, the appearance to the essence... illusion only is sacred, truth profane" (1).

> the screen he oversalted his soup. War becomes a spectacle [*widowiskiem*], a show, when it is seen from a distance and expertly re-shaped in the cutting room. (180)

The TV spectacle of war, while gripping to the viewer, is in this way evacuated of all meaning beyond form—that is, beyond the spectacle itself. The viewer becomes angry not for having witnessed the ravages of war, but because the spectacle has successfully distracted him from his present surroundings. Rather than an example of media images misfiring, Kapuściński suggests that the media has accomplished exactly what it set out to do.

In "The Soccer War" the detailed description of the Western TV and radio reporters' efforts to mobilize mythical signifiers of war is juxtaposed with Kapuściński's documentation of the final moments of a wounded soldier's life. Back at the Honduran military camp, a crowd of soldiers gathers around an unknown 20-year-old draftee who has been shot multiple times. "The bullets had ripped into a young body, strong and powerfully built, and death was meeting resistance. . . . [E]veryone could see his muscles contracting and the sweat beading up on his sallow skin. The tense muscles and streams of sweat showed the ferocity of battle, when life goes against death" (173-74).

Observing the behavior of the surrounding soldiers, Kapuściński writes, "Everybody was interested in it because everybody wanted to know how much strength there was in life and how much there was in death. Everybody wanted to see how long life could hold off death and whether a young life that's still there and doesn't want to give up would be able to outlast death" (174). The meaning of war signified by the dying

soldier is at once particular and general; and the generality of the life and death struggle as it plays out in his body neither eclipses the particularity of the event, nor is it reducible to it.

In what follows we not only bear witness to the drama of this struggle, we are also presented with descriptions of the dying man's live audience as it behaves like a crowd of moviegoers gripped by a suspenseful film:

> Everyone was absorbed, silent, concentrating on the sight of the wounded man. He was drawing breath more slowly now, and his head had tilted back. The soldiers sitting near him grasped their hands around their knees and hunched up, as if the fire was burning low and the cold creeping in. In the end—it was awhile yet—somebody said: "He's gone. All he was is gone."
>
> They stayed there for some time, looking fearfully at the dead man and afterward, when they saw that nothing else would happen, they began to walk away. (174-75)

The passion play comes to an end. The audience files out. But the spectacle of death presented here is not quite the same as the one the Western reporters set out to capture at the beginning of the piece (recall that, "One wanted to record the cries of a casualty summoning help, growing weaker and weaker, until he breathed his last breath" (168)). Unlike the images sought after by those reporters, Kapuściński's literary close-up of the death scene at the camp does not merely signify that "there is a war happening in Central America," (the reader is, after all, already privy to that fact). Rather, it provides a

commentary on the role of the journalist as both witness and mediator of war. In the established semiotics of war, the death throes of the wounded soldier lose their value, but keep their life, to put it in Barthes's terms. If for Barthes it is this residual life from which myth "draws its nourishment," in Kapuściński's representation of the dying soldier, he attempts to resist the mythologization of the residual life of the sign by re-imbuing it with value beyond its immediate signification (116-17). Through their retrospective mobilization in literary long-form journalism, these mythical signs become self-reflexive. In the uncanny—indeed, somewhat marvelous real—representation of the final moment of the soldier's life, it is the mythical that paradoxically breaks the spell of the spectacular.

In the society of the spectacle, the impossibility of communication expresses itself "*negatively* in the fact that a common language must be rediscovered" (Debord 187). In the description of his body's fight against death that so engrosses his comrades, the dying soldier in Kapuściński's reportage offers, however momentarily, a kind of common language, or at least gestures to the desire for one. But it is not the written-ness of the work that negates the spectacular nature of other forms of media—the spectacle is, after all, not image as such, but reified life objectified in image[18]—so much as his mobilization in writing of a language that announces the impossible, yet necessary, rediscovery of non-reified forms of communication.

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[18] As Debord insisted, "The spectacle is not a collection of images but a social relation among people, mediated by images." As such it:

> Cannot be understood as an abuse of the world of vision, as a product of the techniques of mass dissemination of images. It is, rather, a *Weltanschauung* which has become actual, materially translated. It is a world vision which has become objectified. . . , [It] is both the result and the project of the existing mode of production" (11-12).

Kapuściński's conceptualization of spectacular life as reified life in "The Soccer War" represents an elaboration of his earlier engagement with the spectacle in an essay titled "Victoriano Gómez przed kamerami TV" ("Victoriano Gómez on TV"), also first published in the volume *Christ with a Rifle on his Shoulder* and republished three years later in *The Soccer War* (where it immediately follows the title essay).[19] For Debord the spectacle, insofar as it is tied to the private ownership of both the means of production and "the mode of illusion," is "the opposite of dialogue" (18). In "Victoriano Gómez on TV" Kapuściński engages with this Debordian understanding of the spectacle, but like other media theorists of his time, questions the unidirectionality of media communication and seems to hold out hope for the possibility of its subversion at the point of reception.

The short essay tells the story of the Salvadoran government's execution of a guerrilla fighter before a large crowd at a soccer stadium, which is simultaneously broadcast live on television. Kapuściński's sympathy lies unmistakably with Victoriano:

> He was a Salvadoran Robin Hood.[20] He urged the peasants to seize land. All of El Salvador is the property of fourteen *latifundista* families. A million landless peasants live there too. Victoriano organized ambushes of *Guardia Rural* patrols. The *Guardia* is the *latifundistas'* private army, recruited from criminal elements, and the terror of every village.

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[19] The Polish title of the essay, "Victoriano Gómez przed kamerami TV"—literally "Victoriano Gómez in front of the TV Cameras,"—emphasizes the media recording apparatus, rather than the technology of reception.

[20] In the original Polish version, Kapuściński refers to Victoriano as a "salwadorski Janosik," or "a Salvadoran Janosik"—referring to Jerzy Janosik, a Polish Robin Hood figure from the sixteenth century.

> Victoriano declared war on these people. The police caught him when he came to San Miguel at night to visit his mother. (186)[21]

The point of the essay is not so much a eulogy for the fallen guerrilla as it is a commentary on the media event of his death. "Victoriano stood near the running track, facing the grandstand," Kapuściński writes, "But the cameramen shouted at him to go to the middle of the stadium, so they could have better light and a better picture. He understood and walked back into the middle of the field" (185). In a strange reversal, the desire to get the best camera "shot" of the soon-to-be shot guerrilla spares the stadium audience the impact of what they are about to witness. Having been placed at the center of the field, "Now only a small figure could be seen from the grandstand" (185-86). With such physical distance between Victoriano and the live audience, Kapuściński reflects with some irony that "Death loses its literalness at that distance: it stops being death and instead becomes the spectacle of death [*widowisko śmierci*]. The cameramen had Victoriano in close-up, however. They had his face filling the screen; people watching televisions saw more than the crowd gathered in the stadium" (186). In contrast to the viewer of the TV broadcast in "The Soccer War" (for whom, at such distances, the war became a spectacle), here it is the viewers at home who have greater access to the "authentic" event, rather than those who are actually present for it.

Much as Jean Epstein characterized the film close-up as that which "modifies the drama by the impact of proximity. Pain is within reach. If I stretch out my arm I touch you, and that is intimacy. I can count the eyelashes of this suffering. I would be able to

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[21] In all instances I have opted to quote from the English translation of this essay as published in *The Soccer War* (1992).

taste the tears. . . . I have neither the right nor the ability to be distracted" (239), the close-up of Victoriano's execution brings the home viewers closer to his suffering. This cinematic effect has unintended social consequences. Victoriano fell before the firing squad. Kapuściński writes, "It was all over. The grandstand began to empty. The transmission came to an end" (186). But what remains in subversive suspension is whether the government's political intentions have been successfully transmitted. In the closing paragraph of the piece, Kapuściński explains that after Victoriano was captured and sentenced to death, "The government decided to promote his death" (186). Narrating in a kind of free indirect discourse he continues:

> There are many dissatisfied, mutinous people in El Salvador. The peasants are demanding land and the students are crying for justice. The opposition should be treated to a show. Thus: they televised the execution. Before a standing-room only crowd, in close-up. Let the whole nation watch. Let them watch, and let them think.
>
> Let them watch.
>
> Let them think. (186-87)

By repeating these last two lines of the essay and setting them apart from the rest of the text, the words of the government take on an anxious tone. The exact nature of what the peasants and students are "watching and thinking" at the moment of Victoriano's execution ultimately remains beyond their control. Rather than a straight-forward dissemination of the ruling ideology, the media representation of the execution

paradoxically seems to resist the spectacularization of the event. Which is to say, it resists the distortion of social relations that the spectacle, by definition, fetishizes.

The impact of the closing lines of "Victoriano Gómez on TV" demonstrate what Umberto Eco identifies in "Towards a Semiological Guerilla Warfare" as the "variability of interpretation [that] is the constant law of mass communications" (141). According to Eco (and contra McLuhan's more top-down understanding of media communication):

> The messages set out from the Source and arrive in distinct sociological situations, where different codes operate. For a Milanese bank clerk a TV ad for a refrigerator represents a stimulus to buy, but for an unemployed peasant in Calabria the same image means the confirmation of a world of prosperity that doesn't belong to him and that he must conquer. This is why I believe TV advertising in depressed countries functions as a revolutionary message. . . . The medium transmits those ideologies which the addressee receives according to codes originating in his social situation, in his previous education, and in the psychological tendencies of the moment. (141)

Thus, politicians who think they can control the message by controlling "the Source and the Channel" of the media, in fact "control only an empty form that each addressee will fill with the meanings provided by his own cultural models" (142).

For Eco it is the role of the "communications guerrilla" to "fight a door-to-door guerrilla battle . . . [to] restore a critical dimension to passive reception" (143). While Eco acknowledges that the precise tactics of this battle have yet to be developed, he posits

that, "Probably in the interrelation of the various communications media, one medium can be employed to communicate a series of opinions on another medium" (143). Intermediality is paramount for "guerilla communication."

The literary reportage that results from Kapuściński's on-the-ground reporting of the execution of the Salvadorian guerilla for a socialist Polish audience in many ways confirms Eco's media theory. In "Victoriano Gómez on TV" the media spectacle of the guerrilla's execution transmitted to his supporters via television broadcast contains a kind of contingency at the point of reception. The struggle over meaning does not come to an end with the transmission. In "Victoriano Gomez on TV" one form of media (literary reportage) is used not only to report on the event, but to remediate and re-communicate (and thereby undermine) the ideological objective of another (right-wing state-sponsored television in the Third World). By resisting an overly-simplified account of the television broadcast's monopoly on the meaning of the event, Kapuściński summons his readers to consider the non-passive reception of codes on the part of certain left-wing Salvadoran spectators for whom the significance of the tele-execution is determined by their social conditions. In doing so he invites readers to recognize themselves as belonging to a social group for whom the execution of a Central American guerrilla is endowed with a significance quite different from the one intended by the Salvadoran government.

Importantly, however, the essay also exceeds Eco's understanding of how "different codes operate" in different contexts. If "for a Milanese bank clerk a TV ad for a refrigerator represents a stimulus to buy, but for an unemployed peasant in Calabria the same image means the confirmation of a world of prosperity that doesn't belong to him

and that he must conquer" (141), in Kapuściński's Latin American reportage the revolutionary message operates in the very different contexts of El Salvador and Poland to simultaneously represent and interpellate an international socialist counterpublic. For Polish readers, Kapuściński acts as a "communications guerrilla" by instructing them in the act of non-passive guerrilla reading he attributes to the Salvadoran television viewers. As we shall see in chapter five, a few years later this kind of guerilla reading would be central to the popular reception of a marvelous realist work like *The Emperor* (1978).

Marvelous Realism as a "Style of Negation"

It is here that the political objectives of the meta-critical diary form come to bear on the marvelous real. Just as the former is engaged in the creation of a kind of "guerilla semiotics" that might "restore a critical dimension to passive reception," the presence of the marvelous in a work of literary reportage provides readers with a complementary sense of estrangement from the media event that makes room from critical reception. This process of displacement gives birth to new meanings and new modes of resisting reified life. In this way, the presence of the marvelous real in Kapuściński's writing from this period is distinct from the sense given to the term by Alejo Carpentier in "On the Marvelous Real in the Americas," in which the marvelous real in Latin America is understood not so much as a style of writing, but an ontologically necessary mode of perception. [22] Rather, it functions here as what Debord called a "style of negation."

As Jameson notes in "On Magic Realism in Film," Carpentier's notion of the marvelous real seems to have little to do with narrative, but is rather a matter of the

[22] For more on magical realism as an ontological versus literary category, see Slemon.

"poetic transfiguration of the object world itself . . . a metamorphosis in perception and in things perceived" (301). Magical realism is in this sense an "anthropological perspective" that produces "a kind of narrative raw material" (302).[23] "After all, what is the entire history of America," Carpentier asks, "if not a chronicle of the marvelous real?" (88). Unlike the manufactured marvelous of surrealist parlor games in Paris, the "marvelous truth" of the Latin American landscape need not be manufactured with the aid of a "literary ruse" (86). It is the objective condition of a region where, according to Lois Parkinson Zamora, "improbable juxtapositions and marvelous mixtures exist by virtue of Latin America's varied history, geography, demography, and politics" (75). It is found ready-made in the uncanny aesthetic and cultural combinations that characterize the underdeveloped world. *Lo real maravilloso Americano* was for Carpentier not a matter of creating distance from or transcending reality, but of amplifying it.

This ontological sense of the marvelous was shared by García Márquez who understood the marvelous real to be not simply a literary style, but an essential quality of Latin American life. This is reflected in the fact that even after he achieved international fame for his novels, García Márquez—who was a practicing journalist before he became a novelist—claimed he "never stopped being" a reporter (qtd. in Price 69). His journalistic training introduced García Márquez to the problem of representing in writing what he referred to in his Nobel Prize lecture as the "outsized reality" of Latin America. As "creatures of that unbridled reality," he claimed, "we have had to ask but little of

[23] Jameson's definition of the marvelous real here is very much along the lines of Benjamin's characterization of the surrealistic marvelous as not simply an embrace of the fantastical, but an approach to reality based on "a materialistic, anthropological inspiration" ("Surrealism" 179).

imagination, for our crucial problem has been a lack of conventional means to render our lives believable" ("The Solitude of Latin America"). [24]

Kapuściński experiences this marvelous "outsized reality" in "Christ with a Rifle on His Shoulder" when he reports from a meeting space of Bolivian student militants: "On the wall hangs a portrait of Che Guevara, a drawing of Christ with a rifle on his shoulder, and a large photograph of the hero of Teoponte—Nestor Paz" (61). In this pantheon of the saints of liberation theology, "at night, restless spirits gather, revolutionaries and conspirators, rebellious students. They hold their meetings and plan guerilla adventures" (61-62). If for Carpentier the Americas present writers and artists with a "wealth of mythologies," Kapuściński represents these mythologies in his Latin American reportage as though they were necessary for the apprehension of everyday life in the region.

But the marvelous real in Kapuściński's reportage is also distinct from the ontological sense of the term as understood by Carpentier and others, insofar as the marvelous operates as a style of negation in much of his work from this period. This negative marvelous characterizes the overall structure of "The Soccer War." In the opening lines of the essay, Kapuściński reports that his colleague had a premonition:

> Luis Suárez said there was going to be a war. . . . [H]e could foresee many events. In his time he had predicted the fall of Goulart in Brazil, the fall of Bosch in the Dominican Republic and of Jimenez in Venezuela. Long before the return of Perón he believed that the old *caudillo* would again

[24] For more on the relationship between journalism and magical realism in García Márquez's work, see Price.

> become president of Argentina; he foretold the sudden death of the Haitian dictator François Duvalier at a time when everybody said Papa Doc had many years left. (157)

Suárez, the Spanish socialist journalist (and editor of the weekly *Siempre*) with whom Kapuściński lived in Mexico City, knows his Latin America beat well. But this knowledge is presented not only as that of a keen follower of regional politics; it is the knowledge of a soothsayer, an oracle. Kapuściński believes in the oracle and responds to it accordingly. He hops a plane to Tegucigalpa the next morning.

It is news of escalating tensions between El Salvador and Honduras over a series of World Cup qualifying soccer matches that has prompted Suárez's premonition. Kapuściński reproduces the surreal details of these tensions at the outset of the essay: Upon watching her beloved Salvadoran team lose to Honduras on television, eighteen-year-old Amelia Bolanios shoots herself in the head with her father's gun. In suicide Amelia becomes a national martyr who simply "could not bear to see her fatherland brought to its knees" (158). Her funeral procession is a nationally-televised event—the president, his ministers, and the Salvadoran team are broadcast on TV walking behind Amelia's flag-draped coffin. When the Honduran team arrives to play in San Salvador they are confronted with a violent mob carrying portraits to Amelia. The Honduran flag is burned at the stadium and visiting Honduran fans are attacked, beaten, and killed. The next day El Salvador drops a bomb over Tegucigalpa.

As if to explain this series of events, Kapuściński writes, quoting Suárez, "In Latin America the border between soccer and politics is vague. . . . [T]here is a long list

of governments that have fallen or been overthrown after the defeat of the national team" (160). This intensity of emotion leads to irrational acts. When the Mexico team beat Belgium a few years prior, Kapuściński recalls that a warden at a Guerrero State prison was so overwhelmed with joy he "ran around firing a pistol into the air and shouting, 'Viva Mexico!' He opened all the cells, releasing 142 dangerous hardened criminals" (160). The warden was later acquitted by a court that determined he had "acted in patriotic exaltation" (160). In thus recounting the fanaticism of Latin American soccer fans, Kapuściński begins "The Soccer War" with a certain matter-of-factness, providing no other explanation or social context for the irrational power the sports seems to exert on the Latin American masses.

It is this matter-of-factness that Angel Flores identifies in her well-known 1955 study of the magical realist genre, "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction," as that of a *fait accompli.* Flores cites Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* as a classic example of a work of marvelous realism that opens with what is arguably the most famous *fait accompli* in European literature: "As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from a troubled dream, he found himself changed in his bed to some monstrous kind of vermin" (qtd. in Flores 115). Flores explains:

> From then on, the narrative moves smoothly, translucently, bound for an infinite, timeless perspective . . . the unreal happens as part of reality. The transformation of Gregor Samsa into a cockroach . . . is not a matter of conjecture or discussion: it happened and it was accepted by the other

> characters. Once the reader accepts the *fait accompli,* the rest follows with logical precision. (115)

According to Flores the "trick" of the *fait accompli* allows the magical realist work not to be "weighed down with lyrical effusions, needlessly baroque descriptions . . . the narrative proceeds in well-prepared, increasingly intense steps, which ultimately may lead to one great ambiguity or confusion" (115-16).

The *fait accompli* of the Soccer War—the claim that the conflict between Honduras and El Salvador is about soccer—sets the narrative in motion and is maintained throughout the essay. It is not until the very end of the piece, indeed the very last page, that this opening explanation for the war, which allowed the marvelous reality of the report to proceed unencumbered, is finally undercut by the reporter himself. In this way, Kapuściński's marvelous reportage departs from other genres of marvelous literature where the *fait accompli* remains suspended, leading "to one great ambiguity or confusion" (Flores 116). In "The Soccer War" it operates as a narrative moment (or series of moments) that ultimately unsettles the reader's perception of the (false) reality established by the text. Since in the case of marvelous reportage this reality is reported as objective fact, its subsequent undermining functions as a means of demythologization.

"These are the real reasons for the war," Kapuściński writes (182). El Salvador is a small, densely populated country, a condition that is made worse by the fact that "most of the land is in the hands of fourteen landowning clans. A thousand *latifundistas* own exactly ten times as much land as their hundred thousand peasants" (183). In response to this political situation, landless peasants migrated to Honduras and settled on unclaimed

land. In the 1960s, Honduran peasants began demanding a legal right to the land. "The Honduran government passed a decree on agricultural reform." But, Kapuściński explains:

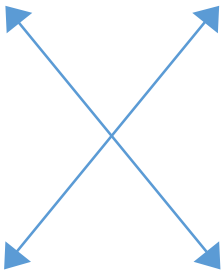
> Since this was an oligarchical government, dependent on the United States, the decree did not break up the land of either the oligarchy or the large banana plantations belonging to the United Fruit Company. The government wanted to redistribute the land occupied by the Salvadoran squatters, meaning that 300,000 Salvadorans would have to return to their own country. . . . Relations between the two countries were tense. Newspapers on both sides waged a campaign of hate. . . . [T]here were pogroms. Shops were burned. In these circumstances the match between Honduras and El Salvador had taken place. (183)

Far from an instance of irrational sports fanaticism, the Soccer War, when framed within the broader dynamics of global capitalism, is revealed in the final analysis to be the logical outcome of neocolonial economic arrangements. The origins of the war lie not in the "hot-blooded" temperament of Central American people; it was a consequence of the neocolonial seizure of land by the capitalist class supported by American corporate interests.

The overall structure of the text then is one of inverted parallelism, or chiasmus, in which the terms and their causal relation are reversed as the narrative proceeds. "The Soccer War" chiasmus is represented by the following diagram in which the soccer rivalry (A) is not the cause of military violence (B); rather military and economic

violence (B) is the cause of the soccer rivalry (A). One need only to recall Marx's use of the chiastic structure in the oft-quoted line from *Preface to the Critique of Political Economy*—"It is not the consciousness of man that determines their being, but on the contrary their social being that determines their consciousness"—to appreciate the dialectical movement here (182).

(A) Soccer Rivalry → (B) Military Violence



(B) Military & Economic Violence → (A) Soccer Rivalry

Figure 4.1: This diagram represents the chiastic narrative structure "The Soccer War." The soccer rivalry (A) is not the cause of military violence (B); rather, military and economic violence (B) is the cause of the soccer rivalry (A).

If, as Debord insists, the society of the spectacle makes it impossible for the world to "be grasped directly," praxis requires a "style of negation" or "insurrectional style" that might be epigrammatic, quotational, fragmented, chiastic (18). This language of contradiction seeks to disrupt the false unity of spectacular life, for "Diversion leads to the subversion of past critical conclusions which were frozen into respectable truths,

namely transformed into lies" (Debord 206).[25] The chiastic structure of "The Soccer War," through which the causes and consequences of the event are gradually inverted, enacts precisely such a negation, insofar as it "unfreezes" the moment of critical truth contained (and therefore expressed marvelously) in the Central American soccer rivalry. The inversion of the Soccer War's causality here amounts to what Benjamin called the "trick" of the surrealists' methodology—the "substitution of a political view of the past for a historical one" ("Surrealism" 190). Speaking in somewhat different but related terms, at the 2001 journalism seminar at La Fundación Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano (FNPI), García Márquez noted that Kapuściński's writing "is full of little tricks and traps that must be unraveled" (8).[26] The careful study of these "tricks and traps" (of which the marvelous *fait accompli* and its undoing is one example) is not only the task of those who wish to learn to write like Kapuściński; it is a basic requirement of his readers who must unravel and then retroactively piece the narrative back together from the point of view of the whole.

The political effect of offering up the marvelous *fait accompli* only to undermine it at the end of the essay is twofold. On the one hand the reader feels betrayed by the author, who as led her to believe that the Soccer War was, in fact, all about soccer. The

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[25] Through the use of surrealist *dégonflage* and *détournement*, the Situationist International developed an insurrectional style of public performance that employed tactics of diversion to undermine the false whole of capitalist society. Poland's own surrealist and Dada-inspired *Pomarańczowa Alternatywa* (Orange Alternative) movement of the 1980s would employ similar tactics of subversion in order to resist the reification of "socialist" consciousness. This movement, which began in the city of Wrocław in 1981 and was led by Waldemar "Major" Fydrych, embraced absurdist happenings and street art as means of subversion (most notably through the recurring non-sequitur representation of the figure of the gnome). In the movement's first major statement, "The Socialist Surrealist Manifesto," the Orange Alternative places itself in a socialist surrealist tradition and instructs: "Instead of Dostoyevski – Bulgakov, Babel, Breton, Aragon, Vian, and others." For more on the Orange Alternative Movement see Michal Kobialka's "Possible Worlds of the Pomarańczowa Alternatywa."

[26] Translation mine.

narrator is not to be trusted. On the other, because the narrator does eventually let the reader in on the subterfuge at the very end of the essay, the reader is left with a sense of embarrassment for having been so easily misled. The surface-level explanation of the conflict is shown to be at best a partial explanation and at worst a racist ruse. Either way, the reader is forced to take some of the responsibility for harboring pre-conceived ideas about the "other" that allowed her to be so easily led astray.

In this respect, the more appropriate literary forbearers of "The Soccer War" are not the novellas of Kafka, but the reportage practices of the interwar avant-garde, for whom "magical journalism" was a means of demystification. When art critic Franz Roh coined the term "magic realism" in his 1925 essay "Magic Realism: Post-Expressionism," it was, after all, to emphasize the return of realism to interwar aesthetic practices.[27] Seeking to ground pre-war Expressionism's preoccupation with the transcendental and fantastical, the style of the New Objectivity was, according to Roh, "thoroughly of this world," for it "celebrates the mundane" (17). And yet, Roh noted, this "new world of objects" did not constitute a return to "realism" in the traditional sense of the term. Rather, it employed "various techniques inherited from the previous period, techniques that endow all things with a deeper meaning and reveal mysteries" (17). The focus of Roh's essay is the visual arts, but the magic realist aesthetic of New Objectivity painting exerted an important influence on literary forms—most notably on reportage, which Benjamin called the "stock-in-trade" of the movement ("Author as Producer" 262). This marvelous reportage, which took the form of both the embrace of reportorial

[27] Roh's essay was translated into Spanish and published in 1927 in José Ortega y Gasset's Madrid-based journal *Revista de Occidente*. From here the term "magic realism" is believed to have made its way to Latin American literary circles. For more on this see Zamora and Faris.

techniques in fiction writing (as in the novels of Alfred Döblin and Ernst Ottwalt) and the elevation of nonfiction genres as a means of both representing and deciphering everyday life (in the work of Joseph Roth, Siegfried Kracauer, and Walter Benjamin) presented itself as a radically materialist literary form.

Among those influenced by the aesthetics of the New Objectivity was Czech writer Egon Erwin Kisch, who embraced magical realism in his reportage accounts of both Central Europe and the colonies. Much like Kapuściński's representation of Central Americans as fanatical at the beginning of "The Soccer War," several of the essays Kisch wrote during his travels in North Africa employ Orientalist fantasies as a kind of *fait accompli* whose ultimate negation serves to jolt the reader out of passive reception. In a literary sketch about his visit to religious sites in colonized Algeria, titled "Vatican in the Sahara," for example, Kisch hooks his readers with an air of mystery and exoticism: "I saw a labyrinth of courtyards, people singing psalms, children, pale young men with white beards, all with their legs crossed, holding ancient editions or magnificent manuscripts of the Koran, committing the words of the law to memory loudly and rhythmically; they seemed to scrutinize the intruder with burning eyes" (232-33). Even as Kisch superimposes Western religious terminology on Islamic spaces and practices (e.g. "Vatican" and "psalms"), he mobilizes familiar stereotypes of the zealously religious, inscrutable Arab other.

But as the narrative proceeds, Kisch systematically undoes the Orientalist illusions he sets up. He warns readers that, "According to Islamic religious precepts Jews daring to enter the mosque or the Za-uja must be killed" ("Vatican" 232), but in the very

next paragraph, Kisch, the secular Jewish communist, enters the mosque of Za-uja Tamelaat and is received warmly by its religious leaders. There he drinks mint tea with the son of the head of the *marabouts*—a man in his 50s, "who suffers from tuberculosis and lives, because he trusts doctors, more than the medical precepts of the Koran" (233). The man's entourage includes a religious leader who, according to Kisch, "acquired his knowledge of heavenly matters from the Za-uja Tamelaat and now demonstrates his knowledge of earthly matters in his capacity as the wealthiest carpet merchant of the Mahgreb" (234). At every turn, Kisch undoes the fantastical depictions of Islamic esotericism with which he introduces his subjects by revealing them (in the second half of the paragraph or clause of the sentence) to be modern, sophisticated, strategically-minded political leaders.

The effect of this structure is to draw the reader's awareness to how Orientalist fantasies (including those trigged by Kisch's own language) have obscured the realities of colonial exploitation. Moreover, Kisch shows how Orientalist tropes have blinded readers to the fact that the religious sites he describes are also political sites of anti-colonial resistance: "Who organizes resistance? There is no need to look further than the holy monasteries, since they represent the sole independent authority, one not subject to supervision" ("Vatican" 232).

In these religious spaces, Kisch meets men who are "obviously more than readers and learners of holy suras" ("Vatican" 233). While they rebuff his efforts to get them to own up to their political commitments—"Politics? What politics? Oh no, the Za-uja has nothing to do with politics. Absolutely nothing. Only with meditation and learning"

(234)—the closing line of the essay—"No, we conduct no politics. Please have another tea with us, *effendi*" (234)—functions as a literary wink and nod. The enigmatic quality Kisch ascribes to religious Algerians at the beginning of his reportage are by the end of the piece revealed to be strategies of resistance. Kisch thus lulls the reader into a false sense of familiarity by employing literary conventions and figurative language typically associated with European travel writing about "exotic" locales, only to undercut this exoticism through the representation of anti-colonialism as a shared ("Please have another tea with us, *effendi*") and earthly struggle. In this sense, when Kapuściński refers to Kisch as "the classical reportage writer" in his memoir-like book *Autoportret reportera* (*The Reporter's Self-Portrait*) (2004), and commends him for understanding that in works of reportage, "the journey of the writer is often more interesting than the subject matter" (42), it is not simply the journey in the sense of travel and adventure that is meant, but the journey towards recognition of the "other" made possible by the unfolding awareness of the social forces that determine the encounter with that "other."

Dialectical Optics and the Reportage Form

Magical realism in Kapuściński's reportage is, however, not reducible to the narrative "trick" of setting up and knocking down an Orientalist straw man; it is also present as an eruption of the marvelous that, like the *fait accompli*, undermines the epistemological certainty of the "concrete." In a scene in the middle of "The Soccer War," which sets in motion the dénouement that follows, Kapuściński falls to the ground in an attempt to take

cover from grenades and machine gun fire. In doing so he enters a parallel micro-universe that calls into question the war's absolute claim on reality:

> When I opened my eyes I saw a piece of soil and ants crawling over it. They were walking along their paths, one after another, in various directions. It wasn't the time for observing ants, but the very sight of them marching along, the sight of another world, another reality, brought me back to consciousness. . . . I lay among the thick bushes plugging my ears with all my might, nose to the dirt and watched the ants. I don't know how long this went on. (175-76)

Calling to mind what Franz Roh referred to as magic realism's "special way of intuiting the world"—the ability to "locate *infinity* in small things" (27)—in this scene we come into contact with miniature world where the ants move according to a different temporality, on a different plane of perception from that of the military conflict. In the face of death, Kapuściński's world is distilled down to a social order whose calm, cooperative carrying-on exists in uncanny juxtaposition to the chaos occurring on the human plane of existence, and the quasi-mystical encounter with this insect army offers a negation of his present circumstances. Much like the typical soldier who, according to Kapuściński, "sees no further than his own nose, has his eyes full of sand and sweat, shoots at random and clings to the ground like a mole" (180), on the ultra micro-level the Soccer War loses its significance.

The privileging of the alternative reality of the ant world is but a moment in a narrative that swings wildly back and forth between the micro and macrocosmic. A few

pages later, having made it back to the Honduran military camp, Kapuściński overhears on the radio that:

> The Apollo 11 rocket had been launched from Cape Kennedy. Three astronauts, Armstrong, Aldrin and Collins, were flying to the moon. Man was drawing closer to the stars, opening new worlds, soaring into infinite galaxies. Congratulations were pouring into Houston from all corners of the world, the presenter informed us, and all humanity was rejoicing at the triumph of reason and precise thinking. (181)

By juxtaposing the war between two minor Central American countries with the world-historical event of the launching of Apollo 11 (and the subsequent moon landing), the realities of the Global North and South are represented here as coeval but nonsynchronous. This scientific accomplishment of the First World is matched only by the "backwardness" and irrationality of a Third World war that seems to be of little consequence to the outside world. Kapuściński does not provide any connection between the two events. They are left suspended as though they existed in parallel but non-contiguous universes. But when at the very end of the essay (one page later) we learn that the United States' neocolonial interests are in large part to blame for the conflict between Honduras and El Salvador, the relationship between the Central American war and this monumental event of the Cold War space race becomes retroactively clearer: the capital that enriches and funds First World scientific discovery is the same capital that is extracted from the Third World.

The inversion of perception that exposes the relationship of the global and the local is central to the dénouement that immediately follows the ant encounter. Looking up from the dirt, Kapuściński meets a Honduran solider, whom he convinces to lead him back to the military camp so he can send a press cable to Warsaw. The soldier obliges, happy to have an excuse to leave the front. But as they make their way back to safety, the soldier is suddenly struck spellbound by the boots on all of the dead soldiers lying in the grass around them. "Look at all those shoes!" he tells Kapuściński, "My whole family goes barefoot" (177). Much to Kapuściński's chagrin, the soldier decides to take a slight detour:

> He would strip a few of the dead of their boots, hide them under a bush and mark the place. When the war was over, he would return and have enough boots for his whole family. He had already calculated that he could trade one pair of army boots for three pairs of children's shoes, and there were nine little ones back home. (178)

Watching the soldier perform his morbid shoe-gathering task with zeal, Kapuściński confesses, "It crossed my mind that he was going mad" (178). But with the collection of the boots a new objective is established and with it temporary lucidity. "Now the war had meaning for him, a point of reference and a goal. . . . The clouds have parted above his head and the heavens are raining manna—he will return to the village, dump a sackful of boots on the floor and watch his children jump with joy" (179). Thus, from a materialist perspective, the soldier's boot-collecting is revealed to be an entirely rational act (indeed,

the only rational act of the war).[28] By becoming "mad" enough to risk his life to collect and redistribute the boots, the soldier reveals (and momentarily rights) the madness of Central America's economic reality. Only at the very end of the essay, when the reasons for the Soccer War are revealed to lie in neocolonial global capitalism does the story of the boot-crazed Honduran soldier come to represent not a narrative break from the larger story of the war, but a small-scale expression of the economic logic that determined the war in the first place. Kapuściński's constant shift from the micro to the macro point-of-view in "The Soccer War" thus performs not simply an uncanny inversion of perspective, but discloses the dialectical relationship of the part to the whole.

In this way "The Soccer War" bears signs of the influence of not only the New Objectivity movement, but also of interwar surrealism. The "dialectical optic" at play in "The Soccer War" was for Benjamin a politically redeeming aesthetic feature of the surrealistic marvelous. In order to explode the false reality of everyday life and thereby attain a kind of "profane illumination," surrealism made use of what Benjamin characterized as "a dialectical optic that perceives the everyday as impenetrable, the impenetrable as everyday" ("Surrealism" 190). The ability to see through the false reality of everyday life, while also recognizing in the false a moment of the true, is also at the core of Louis Aragon's concerns in his surrealist urban sketch *Paris Peasant* (*Le Paysan de Paris*) (1926). "How did the idea come about that it is the concrete which is the real?"

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[28] The image of boots in "The Soccer War" calls to mind Walker Evan's famous photograph in his collaboration with James Agee in their sprawling work of reportage *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941) (a photograph which itself quotes from Van Gogh's still life of "Worker's Boots"). Here, however, the boots function not as a synecdoche for a specific worker and the working class more broadly, but for the degraded conditions of the Third World subject for whom footwear is a luxury reserved for the dead—that is, as a metonym for the uneven development of Central America.

Aragon asks. “Is not the concrete, on the contrary, all that is beyond the real, is not the real the abstract judgment which the concrete presupposes only in the dialectical process?” (201). Thus equipped with a definition of the real as dialectical process, Aragon puts forward a Marxist-surrealist theory of reification in which "Reality is the apparent absence of contradiction. The marvelous is the eruption of contradiction within the real" (204). Marvelousness is a condition of contradiction rather than an idealized way out of it.

It is worth recalling that for both Aragon and Benjamin, the wielder of the dialectical optic of the marvelous was not the surrealist as artist, but the surrealist as *flâneur*, as observer, as recorder of everyday life. Paris is the “‘little universe’ . . . from which the lyric poetry of Surrealism *reports*” (Benjamin, “Surrealism” 183; emphasis added). It is no coincidence that literary surrealism’s two most canonical works—Aragon’s *Paris Peasant* (1926) and Andre Breton’s *Nadja* (1928)—fall under the generic category of reportage. In their marvelous urban sketches, Aragon and Breton approach the Parisian cityscape as a cipher through which to access a meta-reality both within and beyond their immediate perception.

Far from a quirk of the French surrealists, Carpentier’s “The Marvelous Real in the Americas”—arguably the most important statement on the genre in Latin American letters—also takes up the reportage form. Despite his stated resistance to the use of literary methodologies for conjuring the marvelous, Carpentier’s foundational statement on the marvelous real is, upon closer inspection, structured as a work of reportage-as-travelogue.

Carpentier opens "The Marvelous Real in the Americas" with a line from Baudelaire's poem, "L'invitation au Voyage": "Là-bas tout n'est que luxe, calme et volupté" (sic).)[29] He then begins the piece by recounting a recent trip to the People's Republic of China, where Carpentier tells us he marveled at the cultural richness of the cities and the beauty of the natural landscape. Upon his return to the West, he confesses feeling melancholy:

> In spite of my deep interest in what I have seen, I am not sure that I have understood it. In order to really understand it—and not with the passivity of either a simpleton or a tourist, which in fact, I was—it would have been necessary to learn the language, to have clear ideas regarding one of the most ancient cultures of the world: to understand the clear speech of the dragon and the mask. (77)

In the second numbered section of the piece, Carpentier travels to Iran and Central Asia. Once again he is overwhelmed by the cultural treasures he finds there and is filled with the melancholia "of one who wanted to understand but understood only partially" (78). His travels had not given him "the means to express to my own people what was universal" (79).

By contrast, in part three Carpentier describes a sense of familiarity with Russian culture despite his inability to speak the language. Having been trained in Western philosophy and acculturated to Baroque architecture, Carpentier writes, "In Leningrad, in

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[29] "Over there, all is luxury, peace, and sensuousness" [Translation mine]. Carpentier misquotes the original French, which should read: "Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté / Luxe, calme et volupté" (Baudelaire 235).

Moscow, I found once again in the architecture, in the literature, in the theater, a *perfectly intelligible* universe" (80). In part four finally he wanders the streets of Prague, a city whose "buildings and spaces also speak to us of a past forever suspended between the extreme poles of real and unreal, fantastical and verifiable, contemplation and action" (81). Carpentier completes his Central European tour in Germany, where, with "imaginary diligence," he tours the ostentatiously decorated Goethe estate, whose sculptural excesses invite comparisons with Latin American presidential statues.

It is only here in part five—eight pages in to the thirteen-page lecture—that Carpentier transitions to a discussion of the marvelous in Latin America. "The Latin American returns to his own world and begins to understand many things," he writes (83). Only by traveling abroad and confronting at turns both cultural estrangement and familiarity, it seems, is the traveler able to see his own culture with fresh eyes. Only then is Carpentier able to account for the individual parts that comprise the pastiche that is New World culture. Even so, it is not a return to Cuba that Carpentier credits with revealing the American marvelous real to him, but a visit to the "poetic ruins" of Haiti, where in 1943 he "saw the possibility of establishing certain synchronisms, American, recurrent, timeless, relating this to that, yesterday to today . . . the possibility of bringing to our own latitudes certain European truths, reversing those who travel against the sun and would take our truths" (84).[30]

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[30] In this regard, Capentier's understanding of return travel as being integral to the perception of the marvelous real has much in common with another well-known work of Caribbean marvelous literature, Aimé Césaire's *Notebook of Return to the Native Land*—a work which is itself a kind of travelogue. As a notebook of return rather than exploration of a foreign land, Césaire's *Notebook* is perhaps better understood as anti-travelogue, for he exalts "those who never explored anything . . . who never conquered anything" (35).

Thus, despite his rejection of the manufactured marvelous of the European avant-garde, Carpentier's writing about the marvelous real shares certain formal qualities with those of the surrealists. By experiencing the everyday as strange, both Aragon and Carpentier allow the history calcified in the facades of buildings, ruined or otherwise, to leap suddenly to the surface (Aragon's "the eruption of contradiction within the real" (204)). Instead of reporting from the "tiny universe of Paris" as the French Surrealists did, Carpentier wanders and reports from the streets of the world where, confronted with difference, he develops an awareness of the particular hybrid qualities that comprise the culture of his native land. It is only through the "anthropological inspiration" of travel that Carpentier is able to hone a dialectical optic capable of perceiving his own marvelous reality. Far from being "narrative raw material," the marvelous finds form in the mimetic process inherent to the creation of reportage—or, more precisely, in the self-conscious back and forth of the subject-object relation that is constitutive of the reportage form. The point is not that all literary reportage is marvelous, but rather that (insofar as the marvelous is simultaneously form and content) all marvelous real literature incorporates aspects of the reportage form. Thus, when Angel Flores writes that "the practitioners of magical realism cling to reality as if to prevent 'literature' from getting in their way, as if to prevent their myth from flying off, as in fairy tales, to supernatural realms," she demonstrates (though this is not the intention of the essay) that nonfiction genres are perfectly compatible with marvelous real aesthetics (115-16).

From the Marvelous to the Exotic

By the end of the 1970s, Kapuściński's marvelous reportage would, however, begin to fly off into the realm of fairy tales with the 1978 publication of *The Emperor*—a book-length chronicle of the downfall of Ethiopia's Haile Selassie. With this work his transformation from socialist journalist to magical realist writer was complete. *The Emperor* is not so much an historical account of the deposing of Selassie as it is a psychological and moral one—an Aesopian fable about a political regime propped up on fear and favors that basked in luxuries enjoyed at the expense of the people. Which is to say, the consequences of a way of governing that appeared to many Polish readers at the time to have much in common with that of their own country.

In *The Emperor* (a work I will discuss in greater depth in the chapter five), both the author and the reader are set free from any kind of reportorial fidelity to the Ethiopian context. The work bears traces of the influence of testimonial literature and *silva rerum*; the descriptions of life under Selassie put forward in *The Emperor* are presented as a series of testimonies told to Kapuściński by former dignitaries and servants of Selassie's palace who, wishing to remain anonymous for fear of violent reprisal on the part of the new regime, are identified only by their initials. Because they are told from an "insider's" (rather than detractor's) point of view, these accounts present the excesses of Selassie's regime with an absurd matter-of-factness. Interspersed throughout the text is Kapuściński's own commentary set off from the testimonies with italics, which attempt (somewhat half-heartedly) to ground what are otherwise fantastical tales of palace life.

What emerges from these interviews is not so much a report on the political situation in Ethiopia as a timeless parable that draws on familiar tropes of the oriental despot and of hedonistic non-Western people, unfit for self-rule. And yet the retreat into the realm of the fantastical in this work is not simply intended to offer the imperialist imagination a sumptuous literary means for propping up its own sense of cultural superiority. Rather the marvelous elements of *The Emperor* cue Polish readers to infer parallels with their own nation's regime. In the late 1970s, the interpretation of these cues resulted in *The Emperor* becoming a best-seller and an inspiration to contemporaneous Polish social movements that would soon coalesce around the Solidarity trade union.

While the marvelous in *The Emperor* might function as a kind of literary double-speak, a subterfuge against the Polish censors, as a consequence of this tactic the exotic—that "fata morgana" Kapuściński so adamantly rejected some twenty years earlier in India—is emphatically re-introduced. If, according to Jameson, all Third World literature is national allegory, after the publication of the *The Emperor*, all reportage about the Third World would become Second World allegory for Kapuściński's readers.[31] With the Third World demoted from geopolitical ally to allegorical space, Second World readers are no longer invited to understand themselves to be in a common struggle with Third World peoples who are their equals. Instead the Third World becomes an imaginary space onto which the Polish national context can be superimposed—in effect evacuating that space of political meaning on its own terms. "Like a wizard," Kapuściński wrote of Selassie, "His Majesty breathed life into the supernatural destructive force" of Ethiopia's

[31] See Jameson's "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism" (1986).

political and economic standing in the world as the era of decolonization began to come to a close (52). With the publication of *The Emperor* and the turn from solidarity to allegory, Kapuściński's reportage also became a destructive force with regard to the politics of Second World-Third World solidarity. Not surprising, perhaps, the allegorical turn in his work coincided with the beginning of the end of the Socialist Bloc, and along with it the disintegration of a geopolitical context that had once made representations of a dignified and agential Third World "other" politically necessary.

Chapter Five

The End of Solidarity:

Anti-Colonial Reportage on the World Literary Market

"Never have a picture of a well-adjusted African on the cover of your book. . . . An AK-47, prominent ribs, naked breast: use these," Binyavanga Wainaina instructs travel writers in his satirical essay, "How to Write about Africa" (92). "If you must include an African," he continues, "make sure you get one in Masai or Zulu or Dogon dress. In your text, treat Africa as if it were one country, . . . keep your descriptions romantic and evocative and unparticular" (92). On the subject of character development he advises, "Have [African characters] illuminate something about Europe or America in Africa. African characters should be colourful, exotic, larger than life—but empty inside, with no dialogue, no conflicts or resolutions, no depth or quirks to confuse the cause" (94).

A few years later, and less than a month after Kapuściński's death in 2007, Wainaina disclosed in an article published in *Mail and Guardian* that "It was Kapuściński, more than any other single writer, who inspired me to write the satirical essay 'How to Write about Africa'" ("On Kapuściński's 'Gonzo Orientalism'"). The fact that this essay had been published in *Granta*—a journal that in the not-so-distant past had enthusiastically published Kapuściński's reportage in English translation[1]—seemed to signify the journal's desire to distance itself from its complicity in perpetuating imperialist fantasies. To be certain, Kapuściński was not the only offender to grace the pages of *Granta,* even if he seemed to outdo his Anglophone contemporaries in his

[1] Kapuściński's work first appeared in *Granta* in 1985.

blatant "othering" of non-Western peoples. Travel writers like Bruce Chatwin and Redmond O'Hanlon published essays in the magazine that peddled equally troubling stereotypes to primarily British and American readers, couching them in the cosmopolitan sensibilities of the middlebrow world traveler that accompanied the post-Cold War era of globalization.[2] By the early 2000s, however, *Granta* distanced itself from this work by throwing the Polish journalist under the literary bus.

How exactly did this come to pass? How did a socialist reformer and ardent supporter of Third World liberation, virtually unknown outside his Socialist Bloc country of origin for thirty years, not only come to find an Anglophone audience, but to be denounced as representative of an imperialist literary tradition in the pages of a British journal? In this chapter I will trace the reception of Kapuściński's writing by the West in the last decades of the twentieth century, as both sides of the former Iron Curtain struggled to come to terms with the meaning of the Cold War, and with the place of the Third World in its aftermath. To do so I explore the English-language publication of his work in terms of what Pascale Casanova has described as the complex process of *littérisation* that accompanies the translation of literature from a minor language into a language of the literarily dominant center. I borrow Eva Hemmungs Wirtén's concept of

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[2] In his 1991 article "Vile Bodies, Vile Places: Traveling with *Granta*," Charles Sugnet put forward a scathing critique of the journal in terms very similar to Wainaina's satire. Sugnet writes that in a typical *Granta* travelogue one finds:

> [A] rational, detached, slightly disillusioned writer making a foray out from the center (usually London or Oxbridge) to the peripheries (Uganda, Benin, Vietnam, Borneo) where he (and it's almost always a he) sees that, as usual, the peripheries are uncivilized, and the people of color who live there are making a botch of running the place. Though the traveler no longer represents a literal imperial power and may specifically disclaim such complicity, he still arrogates to himself the rights of representation, judgments, and mobility that were the effects of empire (77).

Wainaina's "How to Write about Africa" may have been intended as a caricature of Kapuściński's work, but other *Granta* writers like Bruce Chatwin, Robert Kaplan, and Redmond O'Hanlon would have been equally worthy targets.

"transediting" to trace significant content discrepancies between the Polish and English editions of several Kapuściński titles. Kapuściński's rise to international literary celebrity in the late 1980s was, I argue, in part made possible by the translation and publication of select works that did not greatly challenge American hegemony at the end of the Cold War. Later, at the turn of the millennium, the maintenance of this place at the Western table depended upon his publishing works of reportage that seemed to endorse both Francis Fukuyama's invocation of the "end of history" and Samuel Huntington's global paradigm of "the clash of civilizations." By tracing these developments in Kapuściński's work I aim to provide a late-Cold War case study of what Sarah Brouillette calls a "material history of authorship." Such a history shows "that the notion of the intending author is in itself the product of changeable and contingent conditions that alter in conjunction with the status of texts within economic markets, the legal sphere, and the general cultural milieu" (45).

Kapuściński's celebrity also depended upon a coterie of literary superstars and tastemakers (among them Salman Rushdie) who welcomed him into their cosmopolitan fold. In highlighting the role played by this milieu at the end of the Cold War, I follow Timothy Brennan, who argues that a political aesthetic of cosmopolitanism found form in the late twentieth century not only in the work of celebrity novelists, but also thanks to "a network of academic, governmental, media, and think tank intellectuals in a variety of disciplines who had risen to prominence in the midst of an obvious and obviously central, globalizing experience and outlook" (*At Home* 1). As I shall show, it was precisely such a

network that facilitated Kapuściński's introduction to and embrace by the Anglophone world.

Kapuściński's embrace by the West necessitated changes to both the content and form of his work. In the 1990s, his reportage came to embody a particularly egregious form of what Brennan has called "politico-erotic travel literature of the post-perestroika period" (*At Home* 10). This body of literature—with its emphasis "not on converting, transforming, or merely recording difference but instead merging with it" (Brennan 181)—was part of the larger zeitgeist of cosmopolitanism that constituted an "actually existing Western aesthetics" from the late 1980s through the end of the millennium (Brennan 1). After the publication of *The Emperor* (which was originally serialized in the Polish magazine *Kultura*) Kapuściński's books are no longer compilations of reportage articles written for periodicals. He is no longer working as a socialist bloc correspondent. Works like *Imperium* (1993, 1994 in English) and *Heban* (1998) (translated into English as *The Shadow of the Sun* (2001))[3] are closer to personal memoir than reportage. These late works are written from the perspective of hindsight on the bygone eras of decolonization and "actually existing socialism." There are fewer interviews and more reflective personal anecdotes. What matters now is not the larger significance of the world historical events on which Kapuściński reports, but how he, as the author, feels about them. As such, these works exhibit a heightened, almost self-conscious, literariness expressed through the use of the marvelous and the exotic.

As a result, by the turn of the millennium, many in the global literary milieu began to push back against Kapuściński's work and the worldview it espoused. In the

[3] The original Polish title translates to *Ebony*.

postsocialist era, the publication of works of reportage about Africa in books like *The Shadow of the Sun* resulted in Kapuściński being denounced as a "gonzo orientalist" by the anthropologist John Ryle, and as a racist by Wainaina and several other prominent critics at the time. But Kapuściński's transformation into a "gonzo orientalist," I contend, is best understood not as an individual moral failing, but as an expression of the broader geopolitical context of his writing. Without a doubt, Orientalist tropes are detectable in Kapuściński's earlier socialist-era writing as well, but when read alongside works published after the collapse of the Soviet Union, these aspects in works written under "actually existing socialism" seem comparatively restrained—suppressed even. That they found their fullest expression at the end of the Cold War suggests a literary fact far more compelling than the personal development of the author: if the Internationalist political culture of the Socialist Bloc required representations of non-western peoples as modern and self-determining subjects, the culture on the other side of the Iron Curtain demanded the opposite. The triumph of the latter gave rise to a new form of literary internationalism under the banner of neoliberal cosmopolitanism.

In the mid-1980s, the economic organization of the world underwent a significant formal transformation with the creation of the World Trade Organization at the 1986 Uruguay Round of trade talks of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). This series of negotiations greatly extended and enforced the liberalization of agriculture and commodity production in the Third World, and as a result ushered in the era of "free trade" that would become the reigning development model in the wake of the Soviet Union's dissolution. The ideological shift detectable in Kapuściński's work from the

1980s onward thus took place within the context of not only the end of international socialism, but of the rise of a new transnational regime. With the era of anti-colonial liberation struggles having come to a close, and with many postcolonial intellectuals calling into question the viability of the nation-state altogether (in a manner not entirely antithetical to the tenets of the WTO), by the early 1980s Third Worldism, as both an international movement and a political standpoint or subject-position, began to transform itself into postcolonialism.[4] As a result, solidarity with the Third World underwent a parallel ideological transformation.

In the context of postsocialist globalization Kapuściński became what we might call a "postcolonial" writer. This postcoloniality can be understood on multiple registers. In the 1990s Poland's independence from the Soviet Union resulted in challenges of economic and institutional transition that were in many respects structurally similar to those faced by Europe's former colonies in the era of decolonization. But for the purposes of my argument in this chapter, there is also a broader concept of postcoloniality that I believe sheds light on Kapuściński's work and authorial persona at the end of the Cold War. This concept has less to do with the author's experience of the political and economic transitions occurring in his country of origin than it does with how the First World received Second and Third World writers and intellectuals during this period.

In response to the question, "when does the postcolonial begin?" Arif Dirlik famously quipped: "When Third World intellectuals have arrived in First World

[4] Aijaz Ahmad makes a very similar claim in his essay, "The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality."

academe" (329). With this answer Dirlik's identified parallels between the emergence of the school of cultural criticism known as postcolonialism and the reconfiguration of international relations that accompanied changes within the capitalist world economy in the latter part of the twentieth century. Postcoloniality was, in effect, "the condition of the intelligentsia of global capitalism" (Dirlik 356). In "Globalization and the Claims of Postcoloniality," Simon Gikandi similarly drew attention to the structural relationship between economic globalization and postcolonial theory by noting postcolonial theorists have tended to focus on the liberatory potential of cultural globalization defined as cosmopolitanism, hybridity, and difference, rather than address the persistence of material conditions that position the Third World in binary opposition to the First (as an earlier generation of Marxist anti-colonialists would have it). Gikandi reminds us that:

> For most of the 1960s and 1970s, knowledge about postcolonial nations was mediated primarily by intellectuals and writers based in "Third World" countries. . . . [T]he discourse of postcolonialism and postcolonial theories of globalization emerged in the 1980s when the centers of knowledge production about the "Third World" shifted from the periphery to the center, when many leading "Third World" intellectuals became transformed, for political and economic reasons, into émigré native informants. (645-46)

As a result, the primary audience for these Third World intellectuals was now based outside their nation states of origin. "The global had to be reinvented as a substitute for

nationalism" (646), but more often than not this "global" perspective was in effect, a Western one.

A similar case could be made with regard to Second World intellectuals in the 1980s and 90s. This dynamic is detectable in Kapuściński's literary development. Kapuściński became a "postcolonial writer" in a structural sense when the geographical and cultural space of his knowledge production (and reception) shifted from the periphery to the center. But, as I shall demonstrate in what follows, Kapuściński's entrance into the world literary market in the 1980s complicates Dirlik's and Gikandi's characterization of the perspective of "émigré native informant" as amounting to a substitution of a nationalist position/subjectivity for a "global" one. In Kapuściński's case, what gets discarded as a result of the shift from (semi-) periphery to center is not the *nationalist* anti-colonial ethos of the 1960s and 70s, but the *Internationalist* one. One version of globalism organized around international socialist mutual aid and solidarity is summarily traded for that of neoliberal globalization. In this way, Kapuściński's writing in the 1980s and 1990s came to reflect the West's triumph over both of its Cold War adversaries — the Socialist Bloc and militant Third World nationalists. The *littérisation* of Kapuściński's work discursively aided in the containment of the international threat from both the former colonies and from the socialist countries, and especially from the parts of the world where the two overlapped.

A Dissident Star is Born

In 1983 the English edition of *The Emperor* (now with the added subtitle: *Downfall of an Autocrat*) appeared on the shelves of U.S. bookstores. It was the first Kapuściński title to be published in English. Perhaps not incidentally, its appearance in the early 1980s coincided with a major political crisis in Poland on which the West's eyes were fixed. From December 1981 until July 1983 General Wojciech Jaruzelski, the newly-appointed First Secretary of the Polish communist party, instituted martial law—a state of emergency that meant mass arrests and governmental repression throughout the country. Jaruzelski's crackdown was largely a response to the massive strikes that had paralyzed the Gdańsk shipyards in 1980 and led to the formation of the Solidarity trade union—the first independent worker's organization in the Socialist Bloc.[5]

Kapuściński had sympathetically covered the Gdańsk workers' movement for the weekly magazine *Kultura* (though unlike the rest of the magazine's editorial team, he never joined Solidarity) (Domosławski 268). With the introduction of martial law, the magazine's publication, along with most of the nation's other periodicals, was suspended. In response, Kapuściński and his *Kultura* colleagues collectively left the Party, and were officially out of work for much of the early 1980s. Even so, Kapuściński's writing continued to reach an eager audience. Three editions of *The Emperor* and his book about the 1979 Iranian Revolution, *Shah of Shahs* (1982)—a work that would also be read allegorically by Polish readers—were published in Poland during this period.

[5] Until his death in 2014 Jaruzelski maintained that martial law was the only way to appease the Soviet Union, and thus avoid a Soviet invasion of Poland along the lines of what had taken place in Czechoslovakia in 1968. But, as Barbara J. Falk argues, the fact that Jaruzelski managed to keep Moscow at bay may have had more to do with timing of the Polish upheaval. In the early 1980s the Soviet Union was heavily committed to what would be their disastrous military campaigned in Afghanistan (51-52).

In 1981, with Poland cut off from the rest of the world by martial law and the United States imposing economic sanctions against the country, Kapuściński entered the world literary market when the New York-based publisher Harcourt Brace Jovanovich decided to publish an English-language edition of *The Emperor,* translated by William R. Brand and Katarzyna Mroczkowska-Brand. With Central European émigré Helen Wolff at its helm (her late husband, Kurt Wolff, had been Kafka's publisher in Germany before World War Two), the publishing house had made a name for itself publishing English translations of works by Günter Grass, Boris Pasternak, Max Frisch, and Italo Calvino. Kapuściński's work of magical journalism about the downfall of Haile Selassie fit nicely on their list of modernist and postmodernist continental writers.

By all measures *The Emperor* was an immediate success in the Anglophone world. "[Its] reception among literati in the West," John Ryle noted in a critical review of a later Kapuściński work, "was conditioned by an awareness of its doubly exotic origin—a book about a far-off country by an author who was himself a *rara avis*, a master of the new journalism sprung miraculously from within the Soviet bloc." John Updike reviewed *The Emperor* favorably in *The New Yorker*, as did Tariq Ali in *The New Statesman*. Ali called *The Emperor* the "most powerful piece of non-fiction I have read in years; it is a stunning mosaic of history, journalism, and literature" (26). Salman Rushdie named it the book of the year in a review for the *Sunday Times*. "Always concrete and observant," Rushdie wrote, "[Kapuściński's writing] conjures marvels of meaning out of minutiae. And his book transcends reportage, becoming a nightmare of power depicted as a refusal

of history that reads as if Italo Calvino had rewritten Machiavelli" (qtd. in Domosławski 284).

The allegorical aspects of the work were not only not lost on Western readers, they contributed greatly to the book's success on the U.S.-side of the Cold War. Being "in on" the work's thinly-veiled critique of the Polish government at a time when the U.S. was lending support to the so-called anti-communist movements emerging in Poland allowed American readers to experience the work from a position of moral authority. *The Emperor* provided more confirmation that they were on the right side of history. Peter Prescott gave voice to this sense of self-assurance when he wrote in a review of the book in *Newsweek*: "An allegory of totalitarian governments today? Almost certainly. Haile Selassie is a stand-in for Stalin, for Big Brother, the ruler who brings his country to a condition of near perfect stasis. It's a fascinating performance, seductively written and translated as if there were no language barrier" (qtd. in Domosławski 284). Prescott's insistence on the unmediated communicative capacity of the work not only obscures the complex processes of literary translation, it also denies the existence of cultural barriers that might potentially limit the intelligibility of the work in a different cultural context. As Timothy Brennan has argued with regard to the problem of translation in the context of the Cold War and its aftermath, "Crossing over into another's phrase regimens entails the recognition of the interestedness of knowledge. Untranslatability is not a linguistic or epistemological 'finding' but an item of political belief" ("Cuts of Language" 45).

But when read from within the particular culture of belief out of which *The Emperor* was written, the allegorical work of the text is not quite as one-dimensional as

Prescott's review suggests. American reviewers consistently (and conveniently) tended to overlook a crucial detail of *The Emperor*'s "downfall of an autocrat" narrative: Haile Selassie was overthrown by Marxists, and the Provisional Military Administrative Council (the "Derg") that replaced Selassie was backed by the Soviet Union. This council was, in Kapuściński's words, composed of "bright, intelligent men, ambitious and embittered patriots conscious of the terrible state of affairs in their homeland, of the stupidity and helplessness of the elite, of the corruption and depravity, the humiliating dependence of the country on stronger states" (140). What's more, while Kapuściński's account of the coup d'état lends support to the Derg's actions, he also takes pains in *The Emperor* to give Selassie credit for the modernization of Ethiopia that took place under his rule. Among the regime's many accomplishments, Kapuściński cites the abolition of the slave trade, reforms of the legal system and capital punishment, the publication of the country's first newspaper, the electrification of the nation, and the creation of the postal service (51-52). Sitting with the contradictions that Selassie embodied, Kapuściński writes:

> There existed two images of Haile Selassie. One, known to international opinion, presented the Emperor as a rather exotic, gallant monarch distinguished by indefatigable energy, a sharp mind, and a profound sensitivity, a man who made a stand against Mussolini, recovered his empire and his throne, and had ambitions of developing his country and playing an important role in the world. The other image, formed gradually by a critical and initially small segment of Ethiopian opinion, showed the

> monarch as a ruler committed to defending his power at any cost, a man who was above all a great demagogue and a theatrical paternalist who used words and gestures to mask the corruption and servility of a ruling elite that he had created and coddled. And, as often happens, both these images were correct. . . . He ruled a country that knew only the cruelest methods of fighting for power (or of keeping it). . . . [H]e was out of touch with the new world. (101)

In contrast, the opposition "had workers and students behind them . . . the members of the Dergue [sic] were people of great courage. And also, to some extent, desperados" (141). *The Emperor* is thus not simply an account of the final days of a corrupt regime, it is more precisely a story of the spirit of reason (in the classical Hegelian sense) as it moves through Ethiopian history—embodied first by Selassie and then by a new generation of Marxists who are informed more by the spirit of '68 than the spirit of Bandung. When read in this light, the allegory is no longer principally an anti-communist one. It is a story about communists attempting to take the next steps toward the actualization of the communist project and against its grotesque deformation.

This project is one that might also be said to have characterized aspects of the Polish worker's movement in the late 1970s and early 1980s. For many the formation of Solidarity initially seemed to signify the beginning of a new phase of class struggle in the Socialist Bloc. In an article titled "Solidarity and Egalitarianism," published in *Canadian Slavonic Papers* in 1983, Henrik Flakierski underscored the movement's attention to the problem of income distribution. He noted that Solidarity's program was "one of the most

egalitarian ever formulated in a socialist country. No Communist Party in the last 50 years, not even in Maoist China, has gone so far" (381). The actions and statements of the Polish worker's movement greatly influenced the international conversation around how to "transform totalitarian socialism into democratic socialism" (380). In 1992, in language similar to Flakierski's but with the perspective of hindsight, Raymond Taras emphasized the fundamentally socialist tenets of Poland's trade union movement. "While there are various interpretations of the Solidarity movement," he writes, "the most convincing . . . is as a revolutionary movement of the industrial (especially highly-skilled) working class on whose bandwagon other social groups subsequently jumped" (87). Referring to the 1964 "An Open Letter to the Party" discussed in chapter four of this dissertation, Taras reflects, "If this view is correct, then it follows that the Kuroń and Modzelewski thesis of proletarian revolution was vindicated by the events of 1980" (87).

The left values of the early Solidarity movement were not lost on Poland's right-wing, whose fervent critiques of Solidarity's workerist demands as too socialist in orientation were matched only by their commitment to the movement's cooptation in the latter-half of the 1980s (that is, after it had been greatly weakened by martial law).[6] If today in the United States Solidarity tends to be understood primarily as an anti-communist movement, this has as much to do with how it was represented in the Western media of the time as it does with how the movement gradually distanced itself from its former political identity over the course of the 1980s in Poland. As David Ost has noted, although it began as a leftist movement, after 1989, "Solidarity itself began claiming that

[6] For more on the ideological battle between the left and right wings of Solidarity see, for example, the writings of Polish right-wing ideologues Andrzej Walicki and Piotr Wierzbicki in the mid-1980s.

its previous advocacy of 'civil society' really meant an endorsement of 'market society,' a reversal of its participatory ethos that had so galvanized the world" ("Journalism and Revolution"). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, this re-narrativization of the movement as anti-communist solidified to fit the broader context of capitalist triumphalism. But as with other periods of national upheaval, the early Solidarity's movement's anti-government agenda was not necessarily ideologically anti-communist. Keeping this in mind allows us to interpret the allegorical work of *The Emperor* with greater nuance, perhaps even as a story of the forward march of socialism.

This was lost on most American readers of *The Emperor*, who interpreted Kapuściński's work as something between Eastern European New Journalism and cosmopolitan travel writing (along the lines of the work of Gay Talese, Tom Wolfe, Joan Didion on the one hand, and Pico Iyer, Paul Theroux, and Bruce Chatwin on the other). But as an Eastern European journalist whose work had been informed not by neoliberalism but by Socialist Internationalism, Kapuściński's reportage fit somewhat awkwardly in the "actually existing Western aesthetics" of literary cosmopolitanism in the 1980s. His work therefore had to be reshaped and re-packaged to fit the politico-aesthetic sensibilities of contemporary Western letters. Like contemporaneous fictional works of literature by Third World writers—the novels of the "Latin American Boom" of the 1970s, or those written by postcolonial literary celebrities like Salman Rushdie, Derek Walcott, and Wole Soyinka—Kapuściński's reportage offered readers an experience of "hybridity" and "difference," accompanied by an acceptable dose of critique that

reminded American readers of the "democratic" values they believed to be at the core of their own cultures. As Brennan explains, these World Literature cosmopolitans:

> [M]odel themselves on a nostalgia for "democracy" as a vision of pluralistic inclusion, a diversity in unity. . . . Their esteem in U.S. magazines, reviews, and seminars does not come in spite of their [Third World] backgrounds . . . but precisely because of them. . . . Being from "there" in this sense is primarily a kind of passport that identifies the artist as being from a region of underdevelopment and pain. Literary sophistication against this troubled backdrop, then is doubly authoritative because it is proof of overcoming *that* to join *this*. (*At Home* 38)

But for Kapuściński, as a writer who hailed from the Socialist Bloc, the process of "overcoming *that* to join *this*" tagged him as both a cosmopolitan and a dissident writer.

By the 1980s the literary figure of the Eastern European dissident was one with which American readers were already well acquainted. At the same time that U.S. middlebrow readers began to "discover" non-Western literature, publishers also began offering them Eastern European literary experiences of a very particular kind. "In that mental space of the politico-exotic enjoyed by third-world writing in the metropolitan book markets," Brennan explains:

> [T]he literature of Eastern Europe found a similar pride of place, spawning new publishers' series of high production quality and yielding predictions of literary renaissance. If never quite accorded full membership in the West, Eastern Europe provides examples of the creative energies,

> undeveloped economies, and escape from Soviet influence lingering behind portraits of the postcolonial world, although without the civilizational and racial alienation felt by many metropolitan critics toward the latter." (*At Home* 187)[7]

Kapuściński's first English-language publisher, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, certainly helped to facilitate this "literary renaissance," but the most influential of these publishing projects was Penguin Books' "Writers from the Other Europe" series.

Under the general editorship of Philip Roth, the series published major literary works by Eastern European writers, including Milan Kundera and Daniel Kiš, largely unknown to American readers at the time. In his editor's preface to each title in the series (which ran from 1974 to 1989), Roth explained the mission of the project:

> The purpose of this paperback series is to bring together outstanding and influential works of fiction by Eastern European writers. In many instances they will be writers who, though recognized as powerful forces in their own cultures, are virtually unknown to the West. It is hoped that by reprinting selected Eastern European writers in this format and with introductions that place each work in its literary and historical context, the literature that has evolved in the "other Europe," particularly in the

[7] In an example that would seem to prove this elision between Eastern Europe and the Global South, Elizabeth Widenmann, in a review of *The Emperor* for *Publishers Weekly* wrote that Kapuściński had written, "a neat little allegory of the corruption and decay of absolute power" and recommended the book "to libraries serving readers interested in Africa *and/or* Eastern Europe and for larger general collections" (52, italics mine).

> postwar decade, will be made more accessible to a new readership. (*The Street of Crocodiles*, v.)

By commissioning translations and providing these works with scholarly introductions that framed them in a global literary light, the "Writers from the Other Europe" series brought Eastern European literature (or at least non-socialist Eastern European literature) into the realm of World Literature.

In this way, both Roth's series and the "old world" list of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich partook in what Pascale Casanova has described as the West's consecration of minor literatures through translation and *littérisation* understood as "any operation—translation, self-translation, transcription, direct composition in the dominant language—by means of which a text from a literarily deprived country comes to be regarded as literary by the legitimate authorities" (136). Through *littérisation* literature from peripheral countries is annexed to the literarily dominant center as Western readers "discover" nonnative writers who serve their literary categories (135).

In the case of Kapuściński's reportage, these categories were multiple and overlapping, and at times contradictory. When lifted from its original political and cultural context, his reportage could now be made to fit the ideological demands of both the target audience's general anti-communism and its fascination with postcolonial non-Western cultures. As a "hybrid" subject of the cultural and geographic liminal space of Eastern Europe, Kapuściński offered readers glimpses of exotic Third World landscapes that he (by virtue of his in-between civilizational status) seemed uniquely positioned to

both understand and interpret; all the while leaving Western cultural superiority safely intact.

This could not be said of earlier works like *Black Stars* and *Christ with a Rifle on His Shoulder*, which where blatantly critical of the Western powers and the on-going economic and cultural legacy of imperialism. It is notable that, with the exception of the edited and condensed versions of some of the essays from earlier volumes that appear in *The Soccer War* and (as we shall see) in *Imperium,* Kapuściński's writings from 1955 to 1975 have not been translated into English.[8] And even after having edited the original essays considerably, Knopf's 1991 publication of an English edition of *The Soccer War* required a certain amount of re-contextualization to make them palatable for an American audience. An endorsement from *The Wall Street Journal* on the book's cover reads: "When our children's children want to study the cruelties of the late twentieth century; when they wonder why revolution after revolution betrayed its promises through greed, fear and confusion, they should read Ryszard Kapuściński." Here at the "the end of history" the Polish journalist's accounts of Third World revolutions can now be read as cautionary tales, history lessons for those who would not wish to repeat the mistakes of the past.

The Emperor, however, did not require radical re-contextualization for American readers. This work fit more easily into the West's cultural assumptions about both the Second and Third Worlds at the time. Insofar as the book's representation of Selassie

[8] Book-length works from this period that are unavailable in English translation include: *Busz po Polsku* (1962); *Czarne gwiazdy* (1963); *Kirgiz schodzi z konia* (1968); *Gdyby cala Afryka* (1969); *Dlaczego zginal Karl von Spreti* (1970); *Chrystus z karabinem na ramieniu* (1975). Of course, dozens of other pieces published in Polish periodicals are also not available in English.

played to stereotypes of both the excesses of the Third World despot (who once again seems to prove that African nations are unfit for self-rule) and the self-destructive totalitarianism of the Socialist Bloc, *The Emperor* lent itself to the twin sensibilities of racism and anti-communism, and thereby bolstered Western Cold War ideology as it transformed into neoliberal globalization.

In English translation, the allegory of *The Emperor* ultimately misfires—offering an occasion for Anglophone readers to laugh at the absurd "backwardness" of both Africa and Eastern Europe. When, for example, Kapuściński writes that young people who had gone abroad to be educated in the universities of the West would return to Ethiopia, "put their heads in their hands, and cry, 'Good God, how can anything like this exist'" (52), the effect on American readers is far removed from that of the original intended audience. Where Polish readers would be encouraged to recognize their own experiences and struggles in those of the Ethiopian people, American readers would find assumptions of the West's cultural superiority confirmed. In the hands of Western readers the humor that cued Polish readers into allegorical moments of the text is transformed into detached satire.

When in 1987 the book was adapted into a play of the same title directed by Michael Hastings and Jonathan Miller and staged at the Royal Court Theatre in London, this transformation was complete. The parody of Selassie's regime staged before a British audience now drew *The Emperor* close to minstrelsy. The event of this staging provoked demonstrations by London's East African and Rastafarian communities who picketed outside the theater chanting "Death to Kapuściński" and "Death to Miller" (Domosławski

289). This would be the first protest against Kapuściński's Africa reportage, but certainly not the last.

The Transediting of *Shah of Shahs*

Before I consider the widespread objections to Kapuściński's translated work (which largely took place in response to books published after *The Emperor*), I would like to continue my examination of the process by which his work was "consecrated" in the West. For it is through his work's *littérisation*, and concomitant transediting, that the cultural context that had shaped Kapuściński's encounters with and representations of the Third World underwent a radical transformation.

While the English edition of *The Emperor* reveals the power of the national and ideological contexts to shape readers' interpretations of an allegorical text, his next book to appear in English, *Szachinszach* (1982) (first published in English in 1985 as *Shah of Shahs*), serves as an even more startling and illuminating case study of the way Cold War politics influenced the publication of works by Eastern European writers in the United States. In *Shah of Shahs*—a book-length work of reportage that tells the story of the rise of the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and his eventual overthrow in the 1979 Iranian Revolution—more than a dozen pages of the original Polish text are missing from the English edition. These cuts are not simply a matter of tightening and trimming a subsequent edition of the book. When the Polish and English texts are read alongside each other, one is struck by the fact that the majority of the text missing from the translation (sentences, paragraphs, even entire pages) deals with the United States'

support, both militarily and financially, of the Shah's brutal dictatorship. In what follows, I offer a few representative examples of the discrepancies between the Polish and English editions to demonstrate the clear political motivation of these edits.

Early in *Szachinszach*,[9] Kapuściński quotes at length from David Wise's and Thomas B. Ross's book *The Invisible Government* (1965)—an exposé of the CIA's international affairs in the name of anti-communism. None of the passages from Wise's and Ross's book, including the following, appear in the English translation:

> We do not have any doubt that the CIA organized and directed the coup, which led in 1953 to the overthrow of Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh and upheld the throne of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. . . . General Fazlollah Zahedi, whom the CIA chose to replace Prime Minister Mosaddegh . . . was a tall, handsome womanizer, who had fought against the Bolsheviks, later he was captured by the Kurds and in 1942 he was arrested by the English, who suspected him of being an agent of Hitler. (38-39)[10]

> Mosaddegh tolerated Tudeh, the Iranian Communist Party, thus London and Washington feared that the Russians would come to possess Iran's great oil reserves. . . . The decision to overthrow Mosaddegh was taken jointly by the British and American governments. The CIA assessed that

[9] For the sake of clarity, I refer to the Polish edition by its original title, *Szachinszach,* and to the English edition as *Shah of Shahs.*

[10] The translation of this passage, and all passages omitted from the English-language edition of *Shah of Shahs,* are my own.

> the operation would be successful because the conditions were right. . . . Of course, the United States has never officially admitted the role that the CIA played [in the coup]. (39-41)

Not only was material from *The Invisible Government* removed from *Shah of Shahs,* so was Kapuściński's own commentary on U.S. involvement in Iran, including the following passages:

> The Americans saved [the Shah's] throne, but they are not yet sure if they made the right decision. The Shah draws closer to the Americans because he needs their support, he does not feel powerful in his own country. He goes constantly to Washington, staying there for weeks at a time, talking, convincing, and giving assurances. (51)

> Rich with oil money, the Shah greatly expands the Iranian military, spending millions of dollars on the latest military technology: But someone had to fly these planes, control the radar, set the crosshairs, and we know that Iran does not have a large cadre of technicians, not only in civilian life, but also in the military. After buying the most sophisticated equipment, the Shah had to import expensive American military specialists who knew how to use it. In the last year of his reign in Iran, there were around forty thousand of them. Every third name on the payroll was an American officer. (77)

> [T]here was also another reason that the mosques enjoyed relative freedom. The Americans, who advised the Shah, . . . believed that Reza's only opponent was the communist Tudeh Party. They directed the entire arsenal of Savak against the communists. But at this time there were actually very few communists, they had been decimated, killed, or were living in exile. The regime was so busy prosecuting the real and imaginary communists that it did not see that in a totally different place and with other slogans, forces blossomed that would overthrow the dictatorship. (95)

Almost to the letter, these missing passages shield American readers from their country's complicity in the torture, murder, and repression carried out by the Shah over the course of 30 years. They also transform *Shah of Shahs* into a squarely Iran-focused work—lifting both the Shah's reign and his 1979 overthrow out of its international Cold War context. Where the original text indicts CIA intervention in the Middle East as part of the United States' broader an anti-communist political program (which, given Iran's oil reserves, proved to be an economically advantageous program), the English version of the book portrays the Shah's rule as simply the consequence of Iran's cultural deficiencies rather than as a side-effect of imperialist intervention. As a result, passages such as the following one are allowed to take on disproportionate explanatory power:

> In Europe epochs succeed each other, the new drives out the old, the earth periodically cleanses itself of its past so that people of our century have trouble understanding our ancestors. Here it is different, here the past is

> alive as the present, the unpredictable cruel Stone Age coexists with the calculating, cool age of electronics—the two eras live in the same man, who is as much the descendant of Genghis Kan as he is the student of Edison . . . if, that is, he ever comes in contact with Edison's world. (98-99)

In the English edition, such racist characterizations of combined development in the Middle East (which appear in the Polish edition as well) carry full explanatory weight for the political and economic situation in contemporary Iran. Much like *The Emperor*, American readers of *Shah of Shahs* are thus left feeling secure in their sense of cultural superiority and morally assured of their neutrality vis-á-vis the political crisis unfolding in Iran. In the original work these kinds of essentialist East versus West statements are mediated somewhat by descriptions of the United States' intervention in Iran. Iran's "backwardness" is shown to be, at least in part, a consequence of America's support for the Shah. Contrary to Kapuściński's Orientalist description of the residual presence of the Stone Age in the life and mentality of the Iranian subject, in the original work, contact with "Edison's world" is shown to be not only (or not especially) a progressive force. The historical and political details in the Polish edition of the book undermine, however inadvertently, the author's "clash of cultures" narrative. But when this narrative is presented on its own—that is, without the intervening storyline of imperialist exploitation—the critical force of the work is almost entirely negated.

I am not the first reader of *Shah of Shahs* to acknowledge the startling discrepancies between the Polish and English editions. In *Ryszard Kapuściński: A Life,*

Artur Domosławski devotes several pages to the matter of the missing text. In his efforts to get to the bottom of what appears to be a case of politically-motivated censorship, Domosławski contacts the book's American editor, who insists that neither she nor the publisher removed these passages from the text. She does, however, disclose that the English edition of *Shah of Shahs* was not translated directly from the first Polish edition of the book, but from a fresh manuscript edited by the author himself.[11] Domosławski therefore posits that Kapuściński self-censored for one or both of the following reasons: 1) In the mid-1980s, a time when the United States was giving support to Poland's opposition movement, it would have been unseemly for a Polish reporter to criticize the U.S. government; and 2) He was concerned that the critique of the CIA and the U.S. government at the heart of *Shah of Shahs* would not be well-received by American readers, thus hurting the possibility of future English translations and U.S. book tours. As Domosławski explains, "Writers who had been critical of American policies, such as Gabriel García Márquez or Carlos Fuentes, had been blacklisted and refused visas for years. Kapuściński knew their histories, but he very much wanted to travel to the United States once his books had started to appear and the world had begun to appreciate him" (287-88).

Whether the censorship of the English-language edition of *Shah of Shahs* was Kapuściński's own work or that of his American editor and publisher, the manipulation of the text for English publication serves as a particularly compelling example of what

[11] Domosławski points out that the Spanish, Norwegian, and Hungarian editions of *Shah of Shahs,* which were translated directly from the Polish, are the same as the original. But the passages (indeed, pages) missing from the English edition are also absent from the French and German versions, which were translated from the English.

Eva Hemmungs Wirtén calls "transediting." Building upon the work of Pascale Casanova and David Damrosch, Wirtén develops the concept of transediting to refer quite simply to a combination of translation and editing that makes a global book legible to the target readership. Transediting is, according to Wirtén, a process of "local intervention" on the part of publishing companies through which "global flows" of literature take place (194). In the case of *Shah of Shahs*, if Kapuściński did indeed make the cuts to the manuscript himself, this "intervention" was at least local in its aspirations. As a result of the transediting of the work, *Szachinszach* was was transformed into a work that more closely aligned with U.S. foreign policy interests.

Re-narrativizing Soviet Imperialism

The merging of U.S. geopolitical interests with the literary form of Kapuściński's reportage is carried out even more forcefully in the book *Imperium*, in spite (or perhaps as a result) of the inherent contradictions of the work. With the English publication of *Imperium* (and notably, this is Kapuściński's first book to be written with the expectation that an English edition would be published soon after the Polish one) Kapuściński not only transformed himself into a member of the global postcolonial literati, but he did so by employing Orientalist discourse to explicitly anti-communist effect. That his postcoloniality would go hand in hand with egregious Orientalism in the service of anti-communism is not altogether surprising if we acknowledge the anti-communist assumptions of so much of the discourse of postcolonial studies. *Imperium* brings

together the discourses of Orientalism and postcolonial anti-communism in original and troubling ways.

First published in Polish in 1993, and in English by Granta Books a year later, *Imperium* is an account of Kapuściński's travels throughout the now former Soviet "empire." Once again in Kapuściński's reportage we find ourselves in the "waiting room of history," and the people we encounter here are those who, having borne witness to the disaster that was the Soviet socialist experiment (for that is how it is portrayed in *Imperium*), are suspended in a transitional space between the past and the still to-be-determined future of the region. At the dawn of the postsocialist era, *Imperium* is an occasion for the settling of accounts. As if to absolve himself of the sin of his life-long commitment to the international socialist project, Kapuściński offers his readers eye-witness accounts of mass graves, abandoned gulags, shoddy development projects, ecological devastation, and other more benign forms of cultural irrationality brought about by actually-existing socialism. As the title indicates, the book is also a story about the demise of what Kapuściński calls "the last imperium on Earth—the Soviet Union" (85). Bringing his well-honed critique of imperialism now to bear on his neighbor to the East, he writes:

> [A]t the end of the eighties the world was entering a period of great metamorphosis. . . . [A] climate conducive to democracy and freedom prevailed increasingly across the world. On every continent, dictatorships fell one after the other. . . . Against this new and promising global panorama the Stalinist-Brezhenevian system of the USSR looked more

> and more anachronistic, like a decaying and ineffectual relic. . . . [There was] satisfaction and universal relief that communism was ending. (84)

Not only was communism ending, but so was the long history of Russian imperialism of which the Soviet Union was but the most recent incarnation. "The era of Stalin, the era of Khrushchev, the era of Brezhnev. And before that: the era of Peter I, Catherine II, Alexander II," (87) Kapuściński writes, collapsing these regimes and their relationship to the peoples of the Russian imperium into one continuous regime. According to the narrative offered by *Imperium*, the Soviet Union did not simply inherit an historical empire, it continued to function as an imperialist power, and the Soviet Republics of Central Asia and the Caucasus (and to a certain extent the satellite states as well) were its colonies.

To make this case, Kapuściński characterizes, for example, Uzbekistan's industrial-scale production of cotton (which is sent to Russia) as "A typical colonial situation: The colony supplies the raw material, the metropolis manufactures ready-made products out of it" (260). The nationalist, and in many cases Islamist, movements and civil wars erupting in much of Central Asia and the Caucasus in the early 1990s are presented to the reader as part of the program of "de-Russification" of culture, language, and politics sweeping the region. These movements betray the reality of the Soviet Union's stated ideological commitment to anti-imperialism. In Baku, Azerbaijan Kapuściński writes:

> I am reminded of Africa, the sixties, scenes at the airports in Algiers, Leopoldville, and Usumbura; then in the seventies, the same scenes at the

> airports in Luanda and Lourenco Marques . . . crowds of white refugees. They are yesterday's colonizers, former rulers of these lands . . . [who created] the colonial situation, whose essence is a principle of asymmetry, the subordination of the colonized man to the colonizer. (137-38)

Kapuściński neatly maps British, French, and Portuguese-style imperialism onto the landscape of Russia-Central Asian relations. Having done so, he then places himself squarely on the side of the subaltern peoples of the periphery and against the corrupt, expansionist forces of the metropole.

Although this narrative is central to Kapuściński's other works of anti-colonial reportage, in the new world order that followed the collapse of the Socialist Bloc the audience for it (and therefore the politics of it) has shifted considerably. Western readers now travel alongside Kapuściński, inhabiting positions of cosmopolitan solidarity freed from the geopolitical objectives of Socialist Internationalism. *Imperium* interpellates Western readers as anti-imperialists who can now rest assured that, by defeating the Soviet Union, the West is on the right side of history (even as their own governments are at work reorganizing the global economy to the benefit of the U.S. and the former colonial powers).

Anti-Soviet anti-colonial solidarity is established at the outset of *Imperium* in the chapter "Pińsk, '39" that opens the first section of the book, titled "First Encounters (1939-1967)." Written not in the genre of reportage but of war memoir (with its emphasis on memory and particular individual experience rather than on a "newsworthy" event), in this opening chapter Kapuściński recounts abuses suffered at the outset of World War

Two by his family and neighbors in his hometown at the hands of the Red Army (today located in Belarus, Pińsk was at that time part of eastern Poland). In fact, the Red Army's occupation of Pińsk, which was a consequence of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, was relatively brief. Nazi Germany would soon break the pact, push the Russians back and occupy the region from 1941 to 1944. But the history of the region's main occupying force during the war goes entirely unmentioned in "Pińsk, '39". The ideological work of the chapter is, after all, to establish that, like the peoples of Siberia, Central Asia, and Ukraine, Poles (including the author himself) have been victims of Soviet imperialism too.

And yet, the one-to-one correspondence between wartime occupation of Poland by Soviet troops and Soviet imperialism within the USSR is inconsistently applied in *Imperium.* In his accounts of his travels in the East, Kapuściński is often eager to represent himself as a stranger in a strange land. This status is established from the outset of his journey as he travels on the Trans-Siberian Railroad. "I am a foreigner," he writes. "A foreigner gives rise to mixed emotions. He gives rise to curiosity (one must quash this one!), to envy (a foreigner always has it better; it suffices to see that his is well dressed), but above all to fear" (34). The effect of this and his many other meditations on the nature of his foreignness is to establish both the author and the country from which he hails as culturally and geographically distinct from the former USSR. This self-"othering" is based in a certain political reality—the Peoples Republics of East-Central Europe, while part of the Socialist Bloc, were not part of the Soviet Union. They were sovereign states, albeit ones whose political and economic decisions were greatly influenced by their

Eastern neighbor (in the case of Poland, that influence meant the stationing of several thousand Red Army troops in the country up until 1989). But in *Imperium*, Kapuściński's insistence on his foreignness vis-à-vis Soviet Russia is not so much intended to underscore the PRL's formal independence from the Soviet Union. Rather, it is reiterated throughout the work as part of a strategy to redraw the map of the Iron Curtain in such a way that Poland is repositioned culturally and geographically closer to the West.[12]

As part of this effort to move Poland westward (in the mental maps of both Polish and American readers), the author's reflections on his feelings of foreignness are complemented by lengthy descriptions of the long journey to the East. For example, Kapuściński begins an early section of *Imperium* about his first journey to the southern Soviet Republics (Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan) by explaining that, "In the case of a country so difficult to access, so closed, so steeped in mystery, one has to take advantage of even the smallest chance, of the most unexpected opportunity, so as to raise, if only slightly the impermeable and heavy *curtain*" (37, italics mine). With the clever deployment of a Cold War-era metaphor in this sentence, the Iron Curtain has, in effect, been moved 2,000 miles to the east. To justify this literary act of counter-cartography, Kapuściński later turns to the example of the much-contested Armenian Nagorno-Karabakh region within Azerbaijan as a way to think about cultural, rather than geographical, belonging. Quoting from a dinner table conversation with his hosts, the nationalist Karabakh Committee, he writes:

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[12] Maxim Waldstein makes similar observations in his critique of *Imperium*, as does Marion Janion in her discussion of the book in *Niesamowita Słowiańszczyzna: fantazmaty literatury* (*Uncanny Slavdom: Literary Phantasms*).

> We are part of Christian Europe, or—strictly-speaking—its tail end. Let us look at the map. The western part of Europe ends with a distinct line of coasts—beyond that is the Atlantic. But in the East? Where should one draw the borders? In the East this isn't at all clear. Here Europe melts away, thins out, dissipates. We have to adopt some kind of criterion. In my opinion, the criterion should not be geographical, but cultural. (245-46)

It would seem that this criterion, implicitly accepted by Kapuściński in the Armenian context, would apply equally to the Polish one. The point here is not so much to convince Polish readers of their Western-ness as it is to persuade Western readers that postsocialist Poland belongs, culturally, in the "free world."

Kapuściński was hardly the only prominent Eastern European writer to make such a case at the end of the Cold War. Milan Kundera, in his 1984 article in *The New York Review of Books,* "The Tragedy of Central Europe," similarly argued for an alternative understanding of European geography based on historical-cultural affinities rather than contemporary political ones:

> What does Europe mean to a Hungarian, a Czech, a Pole? For a thousand years their nations have belonged to the part of Europe rooted in Roman Christianity. They have participated in every period of its history. For them the word "Europe" does not represent a phenomenon of geography but a spiritual notion synonymous with the word "West." The moment Hungary is no longer European—that is, no longer Western—it is driven

> from its own destiny, beyond its own history: it loses the essence of its identity. (33)

To assert this Western identity, in *Imperium* Kapuściński goes a step beyond drawing attention to cultural points of contact between Poland and Western Europe. He employs a form of Orientalism that has much in common with what Milica Bakić-Hayden has called "nesting Orientalism," or "the gradation of 'Orients,'" which is "a pattern of reproduction of the original dichotomy upon which Orientalism is premised. . . . [W]ithin Eastern Europe itself this gradation is reproduced," such that westernmost Eastern European countries assure themselves of their superiority by identifying differences between themselves and peoples to the east (or in the case of the Balkans, to the south) (918).

Thus, at every turn in *Imperium* Kapuściński takes pains to draw attention to cultural distinctions between the East and West, often citing various "experts" on the topic. While touring the former labor camps of Kolyma (in Siberia), he juxtaposes the experience of a Polish-Austrian man (the writer Alexander Weissberg-Cybulski)— "a man of the West, reared in the spirit of Cartesian rationalism" (213)—and a Russian man (writer Varlam Shalamov). Whereas Weissberg-Cybulski struggles against the madness of life in the gulag, Shalamov accepts these conditions as part of "the natural order of things" to which one must resign oneself (214). To understand the distance between these two attitudes, Kapuściński offers the following quotation from Russian philosopher Vladimir Soloviev:

> The oppositions between the two cultures—the Eastern and the Western—was already sharply delineated at the dawn of human history. If the East

> built the foundations of its culture on the ruthless subordination of man to a higher power, the supernatural, then in the West it was the opposite, man was left to his own invention, which allowed for a broad, self-generated creativity. (215)

Ironically, Kapuściński explains, it is the Russian man who fares better in the labor camps because he quickly learns to accept his fate. And on a larger, cultural scale, it is this Eastern passiveness that, according to Kapuściński, allowed Stalinism to prevail. As Maxim Waldstein explains in his critical reading of *Imperium*, "Kapuściński needs Russia as 'the other' to visualise Central Europe as 'Europe', i.e., 'normal', or, at least, worthy of normality" (494). *Imperium* is therefore, "a symptom of the incorporation of 'Central Europe' and its intellectuals into the dominant Western discourses and institutions. Simultaneously, it is an attempt to influence Western public opinion with the hope of getting a voice in setting the rules of such incorporation" (496). At the turn of the twenty-first century, setting these rules required strategic employment of the "gradation of orients" discourse of "nesting Orientalism."

Historically it was Western Europe that established and policed these gradients. According to Larry Wolff, "Eastern Europe was not located at the antipode of civilization, not down in the depths of barbarism, but rather on the developmental scale that measured the distance between civilization and barbarism" (13). But, as Wolff explains, "The idea of Eastern Europe was invented in Western Europe in the Age of the Enlightenment, and Russia was included in that idea" (15). To dissociate Poland from Russian barbarism and help make the case for the existence of "Central Europe"—a topic

of much interest and debate in the late 1980s[13]—Kapuściński must adopt a western Orientalizing gaze toward those he encounters in the former USSR.

This gaze operates on primarily two registers. On the one hand readers of *Imperium* consume representations of the Soviet Union as an imperialist nation, cut from the same cloth as England or France. At the same time, they encounter portrayals of ethnic Russians as backward, barbarous conquerors. Central Asian peoples are meanwhile portrayed as "noble savages." "Despite the stiff, rigorous corset of Soviet power," Kapuściński writes of Central Asia and the Caucasus, "the local, small, yet very ancient nations had succeeded in preserving something of their tradition, of their history, of their, albeit, concealed pride and dignity. I discovered there, spread out in the sun, an Oriental carpet, which in places still retained its age-old colors and the eye-catching variety of its original designs" (38). Representations of the exotic are thus offered up as acts of dissent against Soviet conformity.[14] In this way, the works of reportage collected in *Imperium* operate like Scheherazade's tales—they entertain readers with stories of faraway exotic lands and ancient Islamic cultures while allowing the author to save his head in the postsocialist new world order. For American readers they work to establish both Kapuściński and his country of origin as squarely in the West, and for Polish readers

[13] For a discussion of the idea of Central Europe, see Kundera and Ash.

[14] In another example of the "noble savage" motif, Kapuściński describes Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, as "A busy, noisy, colorful city, very Oriental. . . . Countries such as this react to any political thaw with increased chaos (which is often irritating, but also gives a flavor to life)" (113). But, he explains, Armenians are not at fault for the quirks of their Oriental personalities, for "The entire region of the Caucasus was squeezed in between very backward countries—Iran, Russian, and Turkey. Contact with the liberal and democratic thinking of the West was impossible, and existing neighbors did not provide constructive examples; there wasn't anyone to learn from" (124). The implication is not only that these countries have suffered the indignities of colonization, but that they have not even been improved in the process (as might have been the case at the hands of a Western empire). For more on the so-called civilizing versus non-civilizing roles of Eastern and Western empires see Waldstein 490-492.

they atone for the author's prior socialist allegiances (and not a minute too soon—the anti-communist lustration campaigns of the late 1990s/early 2000s will soon be underway in Poland).[15]

This atonement takes place not only through Kapuściński's adoption of an anti-communist perspective as his carries out gulag tours, mass-grave body counts, and accounts of ecological disasters, it also necessarily entails the author's indirect acknowledgement of his own about-face. In one of *Imperium*'s many self-reflexive moments, Kapuściński describes an encounter with an old Ukrainian woman struggling to understand her place in the new world order:

> Thinking about her later, I remembered a sentence Paul Claudel wrote in his old age: "I look at my earlier life as on an island receding in the distance." The frantic acceleration and mutability of history, which are the essence of the times we live in, dictate that many of us are inhabited by several personas, practically indifferent to one another, even mutually contradictory. (283)

Passages such as these seem to imply that the author is also experiencing alienation in the postsocialist world.

But *Imperium*'s reckoning with "mutually contradictory" personas and the "mutability of history" is not reducible to Kapuściński's meditations on postsocialist disorientation. In fact, what makes *Imperium* such a fascinating literary document of the transition period—of the so-called "end of history"—is that it, too, is a transedited work.

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[15] Kapuściński would become the target of these campaigns shortly after his death in 2007. For more on this see Domosławski.

It incorporates approximately one hundred pages of material published in 1968 in a work titled *Kirgiz schodzi z konia* (*The Kirghiz Dismounts*). This collection first appeared as a series of reportage essays in the periodical *Życie Warszawy* (*Warsaw Life*). In 1967, Kapuściński toured Central Asia on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution. The political goal of the series was both to introduce Polish readers to the histories and cultures of their Central Asian and Caucasian comrades and to highlight development projects, both completed and underway, that were being carried out with the financial support and technical know-how of the Soviet Union.

Not surprisingly perhaps, the essays from *The Kirghiz Dismounts* that appear in *Imperium* have been significantly modified.[16] In the original essays in *The Kirghiz Dismounts*—in marked contrast to how they appear in *Imperium*—Kapuściński repeatedly draws readers' attention to similarities and points of contact between Poland and Central Asia and the Caucasus. While writing in the opening essay about the history of Georgia, for example, he points out that:

> The last emperor of Georgia, George XII followed a political course similar to the one taken by the last king of Poland—Stanislaw August [Poniatowski], who was his contemporary. George, powerless and abandoned by the nobility, and unable to fix or build anything, joined Georgia to Russia in 1801. On this occasion Alexander I, the same one who later appointed himself king of Poland, issued a special declaration.

[16] While Kapuściński acknowledges the use of some of this earlier material in *Imperium* in a section of the book titled "The South, '67", he gives no indication that the original text has been altered.

> The history of Georgia has much in common with the history of Poland. (11)[17]

Capital cities in Central Asia are compared to the size of Polish cities, and the role played by Poles in the creation of the southern Soviet republics is emphasized on every possible occasion. During his tour of Tbilisi, Kapuściński notes that it was a Polish general—Konstanty Lewandowski—who helped overthrow Georgia's Menshevik leader Noe Zhordania in March 1921 (16). He also emphasizes that "At the beginning of this century . . . Berlin and London competed for the country by financing Georgian counter-revolutionary parties" (16), thereby representing the Western imperial countries as the interventionists and establishing Polish solidarity with Georgia on the basis of anti-imperialism.

Similarly, while in Tajikistan, Kapuściński goes in search of the traces of Polish communist futurist writer Bruno Jasieński, who migrated to the USSR in the late 1920s and lived in Tajikistan's capital of Dushanbe from 1930 until his death in 1937.[18] With the help of a close friend of the late writer, Kapuściński visits the house where Jasieński once lived and where he wrote (first in Russian) *Człowiek zmienia skórę* (*Man Changes His Skin*) (1934)—a socialist realist novel about industrial development in Tajikistan. "Jasieński," Kapuściński writes with admiration, "believed that socialism changed man's nature" (76).

Other passages omitted from *Imperium* emphasize the role played by the Soviet Union in the development of the Caucasus and Central Asia. "In 1920, when the

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[17] All translations of *The Kirghiz Dismounts* are my own.
[18] A victim of Stalin's purges, Jasieński was rehabilitated in 1956.

Armenian Revolution occurred," Kapuściński writes, "Yerevan was a small, dirty little town and had less than 30,000 inhabitants. . . . After Leningrad and Novosibirsk, Yerevan is the most modern industrial center in the Soviet Union. Here they build mathematic machines, complex electronics, automatic appliances. It is the center of Soviet cybernetics" (26). At the end of this sketch of Armenia he writes, "There has been huge progress in recent years. Many new brick houses. Lots of cottages being built. Everywhere old mud huts are being demolished. . . . We ride down the mountain. Below us gleams the electricity-generating lake [Sevan]—This is Yerevan" (41).

Likewise, in Turkmenistan Kapuściński notes that Ashgabat is a modern city built from the ground up after it was destroyed by an earthquake in 1948. "There is nothing here for the lover of antiquities to visit" (60). Notably, it is with this sentence that the section on Turkmenistan reproduced in *Imperium* ends, giving both the sentence and the section a melancholic tone. But in *The Kirghiz Dismounts*, this section contains an additional paragraph that describes an artificial lake built in the outskirts of the city in 1962: "This great body of water in the heart of the desert is an impressive sight. I was here on a Sunday, when the lagoon attracts crowds from the capital. Warm water, perfect beaches. Many men have tattoos; it's a rather common fashion here. I saw a man who had tattooed portraits of Lenin and Stalin on his chest" (61). Kapuściński then goes on to discuss the rebuilding effort in Ashgabat and the institutions of higher learning in the city. It is on this optimistic note that his sketch of the city comes to a close.

The adaption of material from the *The Kirghiz Dismounts* for republication in *Imperium* significantly extends Wirtén's concept of transediting. Here the movement of

the text from one reading community to another takes place not only geographically—that is, from the country/culture of origin to the target country/culture—but also temporally. In the relatively short span of time between 1968 and 1994, not only has the Polish socialist state ceased to exist, but the value of the Soviet model, both at home and in the developing world, has (according to the dominant discourse) been discredited. By the late 1980s, the political worldview that made possible a work like *The Kirghiz Dismounts* has been officially dissolved. Kapuściński therefore must "translate" material from that earlier work for a postsocialist Polish audience so that it does not seem politically out of step with the present (or worse, complicit with the socialist past). In doing so he politically corrects for his prior friendly representations of the USSR in his Central Asia reportage—and, by extension, of socialism in his entire oeuvre. As a result, not only does the content of the work change but so does the form: *The Kirghiz Dismounts* is a work of reportage in the tradition of factography or the production novel. *Imperium* is a work of personal memoir and exotic travelogue.

What matters is not so much which of these representations of Soviet Central Asia and the Caucasus is more accurate and which is propaganda (without a doubt both works are fundamentally ideological, and as such, both works are at once perceptive and obfuscatory). What interests me is the way these two works, when read side by side, demonstrate the extent to which the geopolitical context of their creation shaped their representation of the other. While one would be hard-pressed to claim that the Orientalist gaze is entirely absent from the 1968 work (or in Kapuściński's other work from the 1960s and 1970s for that matter), it is not until the end of socialism that this gaze

becomes a dominant aspect of his reportage. Remarkably, while *The Emperor* and *Shah of Shahs* both mobilize Orientalist discourse, it is in *Imperium* that it becomes the organizing logic of the work. The main object of that gaze is not the Third World "other," but rather the Russian as Asiatic, *homo sovieticus* "other." Under the conditions of the neoliberal new world order through which Eastern Europe can now hope to transform itself into Central Europe (or perhaps just Europe), Kapuściński adopts the gaze and discourse of Western imperialism so often decried in his earlier writings. Having been released of the political demands of Socialist Internationalism, and no longer having anything to gain by drawing attention to affinities between Poland and the Third World, the Orientalist gaze becomes the aesthetic means by which the Eastern European author is able to demonstrate both his own and his nation's Western-ness. It is this personal and national project that shapes Kapuściński's writing in the latter part of his career—in his many essays for *Granta* and, most notably, in *The Shadow of the Sun*.[19]

From *Homo Sovieticus* to *Homo Neoliberalis*

It was the anthropologist John Ryle who first publicly accused Kapuściński of Orientalism. In a 2001 review of *The Shadow of the Sun* published in the *Times Literary Supplement*, he wrote:

[19] In doing so he returns in many ways to an earlier Polish literary tradition of Orientalism—that of 19th century Polish Romantic poets—who, in an effort to negotiate their own cultural identity, self-consciously modeled their representations of the non-Western other according to the conventions of their Western European counterparts. As Izabela Kalinowska writes, even though they did not participate in Western Europe's imperialist expansion of the period:

> Polish travelers and writers went to the Orient in part to assert their own Western-ness. To survey the Orient in the same manner as the Western Europeans meant to emphasize Poland's allegiance to Europe. Polish writers were therefore prone to replicate the models of cultural encounters present in Western European texts. (68)

> Despite Kapuściński's vigorously anti-colonialist stance, his writing about Africa is a variety of latter-day literary colonialism, a kind of gonzo orientalism, a highly selective imposition of form, conducted in the name of humane concern, that sacrifices truth and accuracy, and homogenizes and misrepresents Africans even as it aspires to speak for them. ("Tales of Mythical Africa")

Other critics quickly followed suit in condemning Kapuściński's loose interpretations of the cultural and historical particulars of the African peoples on which he claimed to report. David Rieff called the book "Post-colonial Mumbo-Jumbo" in a review by the same title published in *The Los Angeles Times*. And Aleksandar Hemon, reviewing the book for *The Village Voice*, drew readers' attention to "the underlying proto-racist essentialism that ultimately casts a shadow on *The Shadow of the Sun*." Like other critics, Hemon believed that, "Despite its occasionally mesmerizing stories, Kapuściński's book is fundamentally flawed with its cultural-difference racism and its speculations about the mind of 'the African.'"

Indeed, *The Shadow of the Sun* is rife with generalization about the so-called African "mentality" or "psyche." In his broad-stroke representations of the diverse cultures that comprise the African continent, Kapuściński frequently juxtaposes the African and European "mentalities" in a manner not unlike the essentialist East-West binary that serves as the organizing logic of *Imperium.* That these binaries went mostly unremarked upon in popular reviews of that title reflects how uncritically most Western readers received anti-Soviet discourse at the time. Similar structures were found to be

indefensible when mapped onto Africa. By the turn of the millennium, even the most middlebrow of readers were equipped with the conceptual tools to deconstruct this obviously racist discourse.[20]

Passages in *The Shadow of the Sun,* like the following from a conversation with an Englishman in Addis Abba (which is referenced in almost every negative critical review of the book), echo those found in *Imperium*:

> His view: That the strength of Europe and of its culture, in contrast to other cultures, lies in its bent for criticism, above all for self-reflection. . . . The European mind recognizes that it has limitations, accepts its imperfections, is skeptical, doubtful, questioning. Other cultures do not have this critical spirit. . . . They lay the blame for all that is evil on others, on other forces (conspiracies, agents, foreign domination of one sort or another). They consider all criticism to be a malevolent attack, a sign of discrimination, of racism, etc. . . . [T]hey are full of countless grudges, complexes, envies, peeves, manias. The effect of all this is that they are culturally, permanently, structurally incapable of progress. (228)

Rather than provide a counter argument to the cynical, racist logic expressed by the Englishman (a logic that conveniently allows him to deflect responsibility for his nation's colonial past), Kapuściński lets him speak at length and then simply asks: "Do all African cultures (for there are many of them, just as there are many African religions) belong to

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[20] For example, the publisher, Granta Books, must have felt at least somewhat aware that the work's essentialist representations of race would be poorly received by their target readers, since they clearly found the original titled of the book, *Heban,* or *Ebony*, to be unmarketable, and decided to give the English translation of the book the more vague title, *Shadow of the Sun*.

this touchy, uncritical mess?" (228). By leaving the question thus suspended it seems that the author would like to believe otherwise, but in the representations of African peoples in the essays that follow, Kapuściński seems to support, at least in part, the Englishman's explanation for the present state of crises and conflict in many post-colonial African nations.

In much of the book we experience a narrator attempting to come to terms with the distance between the hopes and promises of the post-independence movements that swept the continent in the 1960s and the present-day humanitarian crises, civil wars, and dictatorships that characterize much of Africa at the turn of the twenty-first century. As in *Imperium*, we find in *The Shadow of the Sun* an author acknowledging and atoning for his earlier political views—in this case for the rose-tinted lenses through which he viewed and represented Africa's decolonization in earlier works like *Black Stars*. While reflecting on his travels in Ethiopia in the mid-1970s, Kapuściński takes the opportunity to redress his youthful optimism:

> The epoch of the fifties and sixties, full of promise and hope, had come to an end. While it lasted, the majority of the continent's countries freed themselves from colonialism and began their development as independent states. The dominant political and economic theories of the time held that freedom would automatically bring prosperity, would instantly, with one stroke, transform regions that were poor and wretched into lands flowing with milk and honey. So maintained the wisest men of these times, and it

> seemed there was no reason not to believe them—especially as the prophecies were so intoxicating! (128-29)

But from the perspective of the mid-1990s, Kapuściński acknowledges that "things turned out otherwise. Power struggles erupted within the new African states, with the opponents resorting to, and exploiting, all means possible: tribal and ethnic conflicts, military might, corruption, murder" (129).

For a writer whose earlier body of work evinces so keen an interest in the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, what is remarkable about Kapuściński's effort to account for the failures of decolonization in *The Shadow of the Sun* is the complete absence of any acknowledgement of the impact of neocolonialism on postcolonial Africa. A review of the book in *The Economist* correctly points out that "[H]e never refers to the two great powers that now dominate the continent, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund" ("African Memoir"). The cumulative story of the essays collected in *The Shadow of the Sun* is instead one of the failure of African peoples to makes good on the promise of their own liberation. That is, on the failure of the "African mentality."

On the whole, however, *The Shadow of the Sun* does not seem much concerned with understanding the present-day political and economic crises in Africa. *The Shadow of the Sun* is less a work of reportage than of memoir. It is a collection of war stories from the heady days of a violent and unpredictable part of the globe in the second half of the twentieth century.[21] We read at length about Kapuściński's multiple brushes with death

[21] In this respect, as many reviewers have pointed out, the book draws heavily on the themes and structure of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Like Marlow, Kapuściński is a white traveler who ventures where

(from malaria, paramilitary ambush, venomous snake, and dehydration) and the clever ways he manages to evade them. Against the backdrop of this extreme environment, Kapuściński portrays himself as an intrepid young journalist roughing it in "the bush." We are offered detailed accounts of the hostility of the natural environment, which relentlessly persecutes the human beings who dare to inhabit it (especially the white human beings), and pseudo-ethnographic studies of tribal cultures and rural village life. "The problem of Africa," he writes, "is the dissonance between the environment and the human being, between the immensity of African space (more than thirty million square kilometers!) and the defenseless, barefoot, wretched man who inhabits it" (19). These evocative (and undoubtedly exaggerated) representations of the environment are notably absent from his socialist-era reportage. The latter had a stake in representing African nations as being on the path to development and modernization, the former with naturalizing the complex political and economic challenges faced by the people of Africa.

Kapuściński's tales of rugged individualism in the no (white) man's land of the African wilderness also serve to radically reframe the geopolitical context of his Cold War assignments on the continent. In a brief preface to the book, Kapuściński establishes a literary persona entirely unfettered by Socialist Bloc foreign policy:

> I lived in Africa for several years. I first went there in 1957. Then, over the next forty years, I returned whenever the opportunity arose. I traveled extensively, *avoiding official routes, palaces, important personages, and high-level politics*. Instead, I opted to hitch rides on passing trucks, wander

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other white men dare not go—into the depths of a barbaric Africa—but lives to tell the tale. See especially John Ryle's review of *The Shadow of the Sun* (2001) for more on the similarities between the two works.

> with nomads through the desert, be the guest of peasants of the tropical savannah. (i, italics mine)

The reporter who turned to the biographical form to write about the rise of Nkrumah and Lumumba in *Black Stars* (to say nothing of his fascination with Selassie) now claims to have avoided "important personages" and "high-level politics." Through this seductive re-imagining of his literary and journalistic identity, a new concept of non-alignment—one tailor-made for the postsocialist period—begins to come into formation. If, as I have argued in chapter two, in the 1960s Kapuściński wrote sympathetically about the politics of non-alignment in Ghana's and Congo's decolonization processes (and even seemed to see these new nations as potential examples of autonomous forms of state socialism), in *The Shadow of the Sun* non-alignment now required the retroactive disavowal of the international socialist networks that determined both where he went and what he wrote about for much of his career. To be non-aligned in the postsocialist world was to re-fashion oneself in the image of a freelancer; an individual on a private mission. A cosmopolitan *homo neoliberalis* instead of an Internationalist *homo sovieticus.*

Waving his Polish Sword

Kapuściński's turn away from Socialist Internationalism and towards neoliberal cosmopolitanism coincided not only with the end of the Cold War, but also with a new wave of Anglo-European "othering" of Eastern Europe. When Poland and six other formerly Socialist Bloc countries joined the European Union in 2004, the ensuing mass migration from the economically depressed East to the West challenged Western

Europeans' willingness to embrace their Eastern neighbors as fellow citizens of Europe. Fifteen years after the beginning of the end of the Socialist Bloc, Poles were no longer the West's darlings in the struggle against the Soviet Union. They were once again an "other," an invading hoard from the East. In a re-unified Europe, ideas of cultural superiority (and in some cases the racialization of Eastern Europeans) re-emerged and continue to plague public sentiment in many Western European nations today (as well as to influence the political and economic decisions made by their governments).

Tellingly, already in 2001 when reviewers turned a critical eye towards *The Shadow of the Sun*, many of these critics seemed to imply that the book's shortcomings were at least partially to be blamed on the author's essential backwardness. In the opening line of David Rieff's review in *The Los Angeles Times*, for example, he wrote:

> If there is one thing that should be easy for supposedly enlightened Westerners in these politically correct times, it would be to look back pityingly and with a measure of shame and embarrassment on the accounts of Africa that were produced in such profusion throughout the colonial period and its immediate aftermath by generation after generation of European and American travelers. To our ears, they fairly beg mockery and, in mocking them, we assert how far we have come. . . . How surprising, then, to encounter [in] a book written in Europe at the end of the 1990s and published in the United States in 2001 . . . the worst and most debasing clichés about Africa that ever graced the colonial inventory. ("Post-Colonial Mumbo-Jumbo")

Rieff identifies Kapuściński as a European ("a book written in Europe"), but then calls that identity into doubt on the basis of a lack of "enlightenment" on racial issues. Similarly, the review in *The Economist* represents both the book and its author as hopelessly and ridiculously backward. Referring to the oft-repeated story that Hitler so swiftly conquered Poland because the Nazi invasion of the country was met with resistance by the nineteenth-century style Polish Cavalry, the review opens with the following dismissal of the author and his nation of origin: "Like a mounted cavalryman taking on a tank, Ryszard Kapuściński charged into Africa waving his Polish sword" ("African Memoir: Bus rides").

In both reviews, the problem with Kapuściński writing is not only that it is racist, by that its racism is expressed in an unfashionable manner. The Western critics' rejection of the worldview put forward in *The Shadow of the Sun* relies upon the representation of the author as nonsynchronous and out of step with hegemonic liberal understandings about how to write in a sophisticated way about Africa. Even Neal Ascherson, in his otherwise friendly introduction to a collection of Kapuściński's lectures published in 2008, succumbs to the representation of the Polish writer as belated. "He writes in a vein which is already slightly old-fashion," Ascherson remarks, as though he were making a polite excuse for the political incorrectness of an elderly relative (*The Other* 7).

An anecdote recounted by Binyavanga Wainaina in his 2007 critique of Kapuściński in the *Mail and Guardian* is particularly revealing of a generalized condescension toward the Polish journalist's country of origin, even among his admirers. In his article, "On Kapuściński's 'gonzo orientalism,'" Wainaina tells of his effort to

organize a picket in response to news that Kapuściński has been invited to speak at a 2005 PEN America conference. Wainaina's outrage is thus directed not only at Kapuściński but at the entire literary establishment that seems all too willing to turn a blind eye towards the overt racism of the Polish journalist's writing. In a letter addressed to fellow African writers at the time, Wainaina emphasized the importance of protesting the PEN lecture:

> His books are widely read by Development types; are recommended to journalism students all over the world; the big news networks encourage their correspondents to read Kapuściński to understand the "African mind." He is one of the most influential sources of reference for aid workers and policymakers on Africa. He often speaks about the continent to people who make serious decisions about us. And he is a fraud. A liar. And a profound and dangerous racist. ("On Kapuściński's 'gonzo orientalism'")

Lacking popular support for his picket, Wainaina decides to crash the post-conference party to confront Kapuściński directly. Unfortunately, Kapuściński is not there. Instead Wainaina proceeds to confront Salman Rushdie, an admirer and major booster of Kapuściński's work:

> I asked him why he had invited the racist writer Kapuściński to come to the PEN conference. "Not Ryszard? Oh, Ryszard is not racist! He is a beeeewutiful soul!" I quoted to him some Kapuściński lines. Rushdie looked at me compassionately, and said: "Those must have come from his

> older works." I was about to refute this, when he turned to his wife and forgot about me. ("On Kapuściński's 'gonzo orientalism'")

Of course, not only is Rushdie mistaken about the periodization of Kapuściński's racism (the lines read by Wainaina were from *The Shadow of the Sun*), but Rushdie's defense of Kapuściński—his insistence that these lines could only have come from Kapuściński's "older works"—suggests that, in Rushdie's mind, racist representations of Africa by the Polish journalist might have been possible while he was still a subject of the Socialist Bloc, but now that he was a member of the cosmopolitan literati (i.e. an honorary member of the West), it was simply unthinkable. Rushdie's pre-1989 periodization of Kapuściński's racism is, of course, not only incorrect but deeply ironic (an irony that, for lack of English translations of Kapuściński's early work, neither Rushdie nor Wainaina are able to appreciate). For it is precisely in the postsocialist Anglophone literary market that Kapuściński's anti-colonial reportage underwent a profound and troubling transformation with regard to the representation of non-Western peoples. It was the Internationalist orientation of Socialist Bloc geopolitics that made possible—indeed, demanded—humanizing portrayals of Third World "others" as agents of their national destinies. Western critics' rejection of *The Shadow of the Sun* on the basis of its retrograde representation of racial difference is problematic not only because these critiques mobilize stereotypes of the backward Eastern European, but because they fail to acknowledge that the worldview expressed in this work is precisely that which Kapuściński learned and adopted through his encounters with the West.

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In a lecture given in 2004 at Krakow's Jagiellonian University, Kapuściński spoke of encountering "the Other" ("Inny") as the "challenge of the twenty-first century."[22] Citing Emmanuel Levinas's and Martin Buber's idea of the other as a "single, unique being," he characterized the embrace of the other as an act made in opposition to two phenomena: "the birth of mass society that erased the identity of the individual; and the rise of destructive totalitarian ideologies" (85). "Nowadays," he contended, "we are living in a period of transition from the mass society into a new, global one" (88). And this new society has given rise to two opposing trends: "one that is globalizing our reality, and another that is preserving out dissimilarity, our uniqueness, our difference" (91-92). Out of the tension between these two paradigms emerges the other of the twenty-first century, and it is towards that other that we must, according to Kapuściński's lecture, strive to adopt an "attitude" of "friendliness" (92).

In what was no longer the language of socialist "friendship" but the *au courant* Derridian terminology of the day, friendliness towards the other is offered here as a neoliberal mode of co-existence between individuals. Much like Martha Nussbaum's conceptualization of "the citizen of the world" in her well-known work on liberal education reform of the same period, at the dawn of the millennium, Kapuściński declared that the earth's people have inherited a "Planet of Great Opportunity" (92). The international connectivity of neoliberal reality has, it seems, merely allowed us to experience what was there all along—the great human community. And the value of

[22] The talk, republished in English translation in *The Other,* is titled "Encountering the Other as the Challenge of the Twenty-First Century." It was originally delivered in October 1, 2004, on the occasion of Kapuściński being awarded an honorary doctorate by Jagiellonian University.

literary reportage, he contended, was the genre's ability to foster a new cosmopolitan subjectivity by staging friendly encounters between individuals from various corners of the globe.

With this ethical, rather than political, understanding of solidarity the old communist slogan, "workers of the world unite" has been replaced with an *a priori* concept of world citizenship. Solidarities are simply to be discovered by traveling abroad while harboring certain humanist sensibilities rather than actively created through the mutual recognition of shared position of exploitation in the world system. The celebratory, utopian picture of globalism Kapuściński paints in his lecture at Jagiellonian University is a testament to the broader political context of its delivery, in which neoliberalism sought desperately to co-opt the idea of Internationalism for its own gain. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Socialist Internationalism might have no longer been an immediate threat, but its spirit still walked the earth and had to be contained within the new political and economic discourse of globalization.

Conclusion

> "Marxism proves . . . . there is still an immeasurable amount of unused dreams, of unsettled historical content."
>
> -Ernst Bloch[1]

Nearly three decades since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the political situation in much of Eastern Europe today attests to on-going postcolonial tensions in the postsocialist world. Russia's military invasion and annexation of Crimea in 2014 in response to the Euromaidan protest movement that deposed President Viktor Yanukovych has lead to armed conflict in Ukraine, and has stoked regional anxieties about Russia's imperialist aspirations in Eastern Europe (particularly in Poland and the Baltic states). At the time of my writing, 4,000 United States soldiers have just been deployed to Poland in an effort to demonstrate NATO's commitment to defend its allies against Russian invasion.

Russophobia has helped to usher in hard-right governments across Eastern Europe, of which Poland's Law and Justice party (elected in October 2015) is but the most recent and, perhaps most extreme, example. But Poland's right-wing nationalist turn is not only an expression of the long-standing tensions with its eastern neighbor, it is also a response to the economic failures of integration in the European Union. These failures that have coalesced around a populist politics of isolationism and xenophobia, in which both E.U. membership and Muslim refugees are perceived as existential threats to the Polish Catholic body politic.

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[1] Bloch, "The Art of Speaking Schiller" in *Literary Essays*, p. 119

In recent years anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiment has been on the rise throughout Europe and the United States, but its manifestations in Eastern Europe have been especially vociferous. On November 11, 2015 (Polish Independence Day), tens of thousands of neo-Nazis marched in the streets of Warsaw to protest both the E.U. and "Islamic migration." And in February 2016, a popular Polish weekly became the target of international condemnation when it published a cover story titled "The Islamic Rape of Europe," which depicted a white woman draped in the E.U. flag while the disembodied hands of men of color grab at her body.[2]

Figure 6.1: "The Islamic Rape of Europe," *w Sieci* (*The Network*), February 15-21, 2016.

[2] In September 2015 another example Eastern European anti-immigrant sentiment received international attention: A Hungarian camerawoman for a nationalist TV news station was caught on camera kicking and tripping a Syrian family as they ran from police in a Hungarian town near the Serbian border.

Such expressions of racism may appear to be very contemporary reactions to the specific geopolitical dynamics of the Syrian refugee crisis, but the possibility of the rise of right-wing nationalism in response to the economic and political failures of the Socialist Bloc was not lost on Marxist critics of the Polish People's Republic. Already in 1968 Polish philosopher Leszek Kołakowski recognized that nationalism posed a major threat to the formation of an alternative socialist project in Poland:

> The Left must clearly and continuously proclaim its negative stand against both rightist currents, of which one is the expression of Stalinist inertia, and the other of the inertia of capitalism in its most backward and obscurantist cast. The Left is in grave danger if it directs its criticism towards only one pressure, for it thus blurs its political demarcations. Its position must be expressed in simultaneous negation. The Left must oppose Polish nationalism as adamantly as it does foreign nationalisms that threaten Poland. ("The Concept of the Left", 157)

Kołakowski's words read as a prescient warning to the Polish Left, while also offering an astute characterization of political dynamics currently unfolding in many other parts of the world. In this sense, contemporary Polish political sentiment is but a local expression of a larger zeitgeist that has elsewhere taken the form of the U.K.'s "Brexit" vote to leave the European Union, the U.S. election of Donald Trump, and growth of right-wing nationalist and anti-immigrant movements throughout the United States and Western Europe. The blurring of "political demarcations" between Left and Right against which Kołakowski warned, has become, I would argue, a significant feature of the populist movements sweeping the globe today.

Of course, one might also be tempted to look beyond the present juncture and point out that right-wing nationalism seems to be a recurring feature of Polish politics and culture. From this perspective, present-day anti-Muslim sentiment can be understood as a contemporary expression of a tendency towards xenophobia that in the past century took the form of anti-Semitism.

While both the synchronic global perspective and the historical national one have explanatory value, such efforts to "contextualize" and "historicize" the Polish Right risk reifying the politics of Polish national self-determination as intrinsically racist and xenophobic. As a result, the culture of solidarity that arose between the Second and Third Worlds during the Cold War becomes increasingly impossible to imagine. It is tossed aside as yet another example of Soviet propaganda that failed to live up to its rhetoric, rather than recognized as a very real (if transitory) political culture worth excavating.

From the literary perspective with which I have attempted to examine this buried political culture, it matters not if these solidarities were genuinely felt by large numbers of people at the national level (either from a position within or against socialism). What matters is that the discursive and material existence of this culture points to the possibility of a set of alternative narratives for the the region: of Second World orientation towards the Third World (rather than the First), and of nationalism within the framework of Internationalism. Identifying such narratives opens up space for understanding the xenophobia we are seeing today to be a contingent, rather than essential, expressions of the Polish struggle for national self-determination.

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In this dissertation I have sought to understand these alternative narratives by developing a Marxist literary theory of socialist reportage as as twentieth century documentarian practice that drew upon and subverted the aesthetics of both socialist realism and Western imperialist travel writing. Although my work here has been primarily focused on Kapuściński and select Polish writers and filmmakers, I believe the international scope and internationalist spirit of the reportage genre points the way toward a concept of Transnational Literature thus far missing from the current academic discourse of literary studies. Transnational Literature must be approached, I contend, not as an object (or series of objects) of analysis, but as a conceptual problem through which reading and writing are understood to be both highly situated in their countries of origin and embedded in global networks that shape the way meaning is made and contested.

These networks are far from fixed. Therefore, rather than treat Transnational Literature as a wholly contemporary expression of the forces of neoliberal globalization through which millions of people have been displaced and forced to migrate due to war, famine, and economic instability, the works of reportage I have examined in this dissertation suggest that we stand much to gain by examining its Cold War-era antecedent in Internationalist Literature. As I have aimed to demonstrate in the chapters of this dissertation, this body of work expressed a global political culture for which nation states—decolonized and internationally cooperative—were the basis on which socialist ideals might be actualized. If today this notion of the nation seems quaint, the seemingly spontaneous up-swelling of fervent nationalism on the part of the global right

should serve to remind the Left that we abandon the political terrain of the nation state at our own peril.

Alongside my efforts to develop a Marxist literary theory of reportage I have sought to construct constellations from the historical archive of Second World encounters with the Third World. By lifting the historical fragment that is Polish socialism from its context and juxtaposing it with another historical fragment—that of socialism in Africa or Latin America—a constellation is formed out of which a new image of socialism (a third way, anti-imperialist socialism) suddenly comes in to view. When this constellation is wrested from the ruins of the twentieth-century socialist project and thrust into an encounter with the postsocialist present, a "dialectical image" emerges that interrupts the presumed narrative of the absolute failure of that project. This image at once demands and points the way toward a re-narrativization of the histories of the national and international contexts from which these fragments have been wrested, and opens up conceptual space for thinking beyond the political impasse of the present moment.

I will conclude with a final fragment: In the fall of 1968, in an act of solidarity inspired by Buddhist monks' self-immolation protests against the Vietnam war, Ryszard Siwiec lit himself on fire at Warsaw's soccer stadium to protest the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.[3] At the time of his act of protest, Siwiec held a sign that read, "Za naszą i waszą wolność" ("For our freedom and yours"). These words were carefully chosen. The slogan dates to 1830, when it was used to articulate a politics of solidarity between

[3] A few months later, in January 1969, Czech student Jan Palach committed self-immolation in Prague. And in February another Czech student, Jan Zajíc, did the same, in the same place, followed by Evžen Plocek in the city of Jihlava, in April.

the Polish national uprising against Imperial Russia and that of the Russian Decembrists, who had revolted against the Czar a few years prior. After the failed 1830 Polish uprising the slogan continued to be used by Poles in exile who fought in Western Europe's 1848 revolutions. Later in the twentieth century, "For Our Freedom and Yours" would be the rallying cry of the Polish brigades in the Spanish Civil War, as well as of those who took part in the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. In 1968 Siwiec revived the slogan to express solidarity with Czechoslovakia as Warsaw Pact tanks prepared to crush the Prague Spring.

Siwiec's death is almost universally interpreted as a militant act of dissidence and desperation that testifies to the brutality of life under the socialist regime. I would not wish to dispute this interpretation, but I also believe that there is more to read in Siwiec's final act. While the content of the sign gestured toward the long history of the Polish struggle for national liberation and socialist democracy, the form of his protest—self-immolation—established links with the contemporaneous anti-imperialist struggle in Vietnam. In this way Siwiec's tragic protest propelled its audience beyond the context of the Warsaw Pact—both geographically and temporally—and into "the unbounded space in which insurgents act" (Buck-Morss 101).

If the contradictions of socialism and anti-imperialism in the second half of the twentieth century found form not only in works of literature and cinema, but also in the embodied protests of Second and Third World peoples, literary narratives also shaped the form and content of those protests. For the power of the slogan "For our freedom and yours," lies not simply in the fact that it gives voice to a mutual cause whose content may

shift according to the political-historical context (i.e. to a structure), but in its insistence on a narrative of liberation for which the success of one national struggle is fundamentally tied to, indeed dependent upon, that of another. It is this narrative that is at the heart of the poetics of Cold War internationalism that I have endeavored to elaborate in this dissertation. And it is this narrative that, despite postsocialist pronouncements of the end of history, proceeds uninterrupted into the present. I believe that identifying and preserving its strands must be at the very center of the intellectual and political project of Marxist postsocialist critique. Through such critique the political energies of the socialist past are freed from ideological postsocialism and allowed act upon the present to form a vision of the future in which the coming into consciousness of the global proletariat may one day exceed its anticipatory expression in literary form.

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